

DECCAN HERALD



DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good



K'taka outplay Mumbai, enter Vijay Hazare Trophy semis

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Take re-look at BMIC project, junk old one, HC tells state

Court raps NICE, govt for killing project at cost of citizens, environment

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Karnataka High Court on Monday directed the state government to take a re-look at the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) Project and pulled up its promoters and the state government, noting that after 30 years, the project has remained only on paper.

Asking the government to discard the old project, a division bench of Justices D K Singh and Venkatesh Naik T came down heavily on Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise (NICE), Nandi Economic Corridor Enterprise Ltd and the state authorities for killing the project “at the cost of citizens and the environment”.

The bench made the observations while dismissing a petition seeking sites in lieu of eight acres acquired in Kommaghatta village, Kengeri hobli, Bengaluru South taluk. The court said the petitioner, having accepted the compen-

BUMPY ROAD

■ BMIC was approved in 1995, Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise chosen to implement project

■ The initial plan included number of projects to develop corridor between Bengaluru and Mysuru

■ Project also included a plan to develop five new townships along the corridor

■ Total extent of land proposed for the BMIC Project is close to 20,193 acres



■ However, most of the plans remained on paper as poor planning and legal hurdles marred project

■ In 2012, Lokayukta probe was ordered to check irregularities in project implementation

“It has not been beneficial to the public, but it may have been beneficial to advocates as more than 2,000 cases got added to this court docket.”

KARNATAKA HIGH COURT

deviation by the project proponents. The bench said it would be in the interest of the city, citizens, environment and the future, to re-look at the project, discarding the old one.

“The project proponents are sitting on a huge land bank but without its proper use since the expressway has not been constructed and there is no sign of it being constructed in future. Therefore, we direct the state government to re-look at the project and take appropriate steps,” the bench said.

“This is a classic example of non-commitment to public planning by people in power for various reasons, which may be due to large scale corruption, bureaucratic trapping and litigation,” the high court said noting that at least 2,000 cases were filed by different people including landowners.

“This project, instead of de-clogging and decongesting the city by developing seven townships (modified to five) on the Bangalore-Mysore infrastructure road, has clogged and congested the high court and other courts. It has not been beneficial to the public, but it may have been beneficial to advocates inasmuch as more than 2,000 cases got added to this court docket. More than six times the parties have approached the Supreme Court,” the high court said.

6 teachers, 2 students held over leak of SSLC prep papers

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Bengaluru Police have arrested six teachers and two minor students for their alleged role in the leak and sale of SSLC preparatory exam question papers.

Investigations revealed “shocking” details about the

leak: students openly advertised the question papers on social media and sold them through private messages for Rs 200 to Rs 500, a senior police officer said.

In a police complaint, the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board

(KSEAB) stated that on January 6, it received information about social media accounts sharing screenshots of the leaked question papers.

The posts were shared on Instagram, Telegram and other social media.

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Quickly



No RAC, waiting list for Vande Bharat sleepers

The railways has announced the fare structure and travel rules for its upcoming Vande Bharat Sleeper Express trains. These trains will not permit RAC or waitlisted tickets. Only confirmed passengers will be allowed to travel.

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2 Bengal nurses show Nipah virus symptoms

Two suspected cases of Nipah virus have been detected in West Bengal, official sources said. Two nurses working at a private hospital in North 24 Parganas district were showing symptoms of Nipah virus. Their condition is stated to be critical.

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Silver soars 6% to record Rs 2.65 lakh/kg

Silver prices rallied sharply by Rs 15,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 2,65,000 per kg in the national capital on Monday, and gold advanced to a fresh record of Rs 1,44,600 per 10 grams, mirroring strong gains in the global markets.

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ICC unlikely to accept B'desh's concerns

The ICC on Monday indicated that it is unlikely to accept Bangladesh's demand for a change of venue for its T20 World Cup matches in India after an assessment report of the country's security concerns.

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In Fond Remembrance



Sri N. Vinaya Hegde
03 April 1939 – 01 January 2026

The Trustees of Karnataka Professional Colleges Foundation (KPCF) & Consortium of Deemed Universities in Karnataka (CODEUNIK) deeply mourn the passing of Sri N. Vinaya Hegde (3 April 1939 – 1 January 2026), distinguished educationist, industrialist, and Chancellor of NITTE (Deemed to be University). Son of Late Justice K. S. Hegde, he dedicated his life to building institutions of excellence, expanding access to quality education and healthcare across Karnataka. His visionary leadership shaped the growth of nearly 40 institutions under the Nitte Education Trust and strengthened industry, public policy, and regional development through several key roles he was holding. We honour his remarkable legacy and extend our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. May the almighty grant Sadgati to departed soul.

Trustees & Members of CODEUNIK & KPCF

His Holiness
Jagadguru Sri Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji
Chancellor, JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Mysuru

Dr. Prabhakar B. Kore
President, CODEUNIK & Chancellor, K.L.E. Academy of Higher Education, Belagavi & Vice-President, KPCF

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Chancellor, BLDE University, Vijayapura

Dr. S. Kumar
Secretary, CODEUNIK, Bengaluru

Ward map, scope to change in wait for civic elections

5 mayors, smaller wards & clipped clout of corporators

NAVEEN MENEZES
BENGALURU, DHNS

When Bengaluru's municipal corporations finally go to polls by June 30, the political landscape will be completely different than what it was when the city held the last civic body polls over a decade ago.

The IT city will have a total of five mayors instead of one, and 369 councillors spread across five different corporations even as the overall boundary remains as large as the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

With the size of the ward reduced to more than half as compared to last elections, not all former councillors are eager to contest the elections, opening the doors for a large number of fresh faces. New political outfits like Bengaluru NavaNirman Party (BNP) are leaving no stone unturned to make an electoral impact.

As per the submissions made

before the Supreme Court, the State Election Commission is expected to complete the final publication of the ward-wise electoral roll by March 16.

The state government has also assured the apex court that the final notification for the reservation of wards will be completed on February 20.

Srikanth Narasimhan, the BNP general secretary, hopes that there will not be any further delay. "As one of the petitioners in the case in the Supreme Court, we hope that the court will be able to hold the government and the state election commission accountable to at least this deadline. The government has not shown any inclination in the last five years to conduct the election and it is now up to the court to ensure compliance," he said.

The run-up to the election may also see better response to civic grievance which was now a tall ask, especially for ordinary citizens who had no direct access to either MLAs



Bengaluru will have a total of five mayors instead of one, and 369 councillors spread across five different corporations.

or officials.

V K Srivatsa, a resident of Hemmigeppura, said the erstwhile BBMP or Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has not come up with a solution to resolve grievances as implemented by Bescom.

"When I post a complaint on Sahaya and the problem is not fixed, there is no escalation matrix. In the absence of an elected council, the grievance was never addressed," he said.

There is also fear that the election could get postponed further. Former councillor N R Ramesh said the government has created five corporations, but the offices were not ready.

"The office requires space for the mayor, standing com-

Rejig Recap

Aug 2015: Last elections held for erstwhile BBMP

Sept 2020: Term of elected BBMP council expires; administrators appointed

Oct 2020: BJP govt amends municipal law to expand number of wards from 198 to 243.

Dec 2020: High Court directs finalisation of reservations and elections (for 198 wards). Government approaches Supreme Court; HC direction stayed later, marking the beginning of a long judicial fight.

Aug 2023: Cong govt springs a surprise, reduces number of wards from 243 to 225, further delaying civic elections.

Sept 2025: Greater Bengaluru Governance Act, 2024, which carved out five corporations by splitting BBMP, comes into effect

Nov 2025: Govt creates 369 wards in place of 198

mittee members and councillors, but none of that has been provided. The elected council is expected to meet every month. There is no council hall too," he said.

Ballot papers may come back for B'luru local body polls

BENGALURU, DHNS: When Bengaluru last went to the polls for erstwhile BBMP, voting was conducted using electronic voting machines (EVMs). But there is no clarity on whether the State Election Commission (SEC) will continue to use EVMs in civic body elections.

G S Sangreshi, a former district judge and the State Election Commissioner, told *DH* that the commission is well prepared to conduct the elections to Bengaluru's municipal body in line with Supreme Court orders.

He, however, did not disclose whether the commission would rely on EVMs or revert to ballot papers.

Multiple sources in the government told *DH* that the elections in Bengaluru were likely to be held using ballot papers, in line with the plan for ZP & TP polls.

The govt believes that electronic voting machines can be manipulated, unlike ballot papers.

The Greater Bengaluru Governance Act, 2024, allows elections to 5 municipal corporations to be conducted either using ballot or the electronic voting machines.

It is, however, learnt that the commission is yet to make a final decision.

Women's panel wants action against Yash's film 'Toxic'

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka State Commission for Women has written to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to take action against the Kannada movie 'Toxic' starring Yash for the display of "obscene scenes" in the introduction teaser of the movie.

The commission wrote to the Censor Board in response to a complaint filed by Usha Mohan, state secretary of Aam Aadmi Party, about the alleged "obscene scenes in the trailer being extremely harmful to the social well-being of women and children", according to a press statement released by the commission.

"The (film's) scenes have been released in public without any age limit or warning, and are degrading to the dignity of women and an insult to Kannada's cultural world. Appropriate action should be taken to cancel this teaser and remove it from online platforms," the commission has urged the Censor Board.

Post SC directive on GBA polls, BJP & Cong go into poll mode

No elected body in B'luru since 2020

BENGALURU, DHNS

With the Supreme Court issuing a directive to the Karnataka government to hold the "long-pending" Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) elections (to the five city corporations) before June 30, and fixing February 20 as the deadline to publish the final ward-wise reservation, the ruling Congress, the Opposition BJP and the JD(S) are gearing up for the civic body elections, which were last held in 2015.

The civic body has been without an elected body since September 2020.

The BJP, which opposed the splitting of the previous Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike earlier, raising concern over disparity in revenue generation and development, said it is "prepared" to take on the ruling party in the upcoming polls.

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly R Ashoka said, "The pothole-ridden roads of Bengaluru, the number of people who have lost their lives due to bad roads, and the mounting garbage are sufficient reasons to hold the GBA elections at the earliest."

"The ruling Congress will be defeated as people will not for-

give their sins," he predicted.

Ashoka also clarified that the party's central leadership would take a call on the possible alliance with the JD(S) for the civic polls.

Yelahanka BJP MLA S R Vishwanath said the party is opposed to the formation of GBA, as splitting it into five city corporations was unscientific. "But the ruling Congress carried out the ward delimitation and fixed the reservation as per its whims and fancies despite our objections. However, our party is prepared to face the elections even if they are held within a week."

"We have already held ward-level meetings and are confident of winning across all five corporations," he added.

The party has formed an 11-member team of coordinators led by state president B Y Vijayendra and comprising leaders of the Opposition, City MPs, MPs C N Manjunath, Shobha Karandlaje and former chief minister D V Sadananda Gowda and MLA Suresh Kumar.

The party has also appointed in-charge and co-in-charge leaders for each corporation, besides assigning an in-charge leader to each of the three organisational districts in the city.

The ruling Congress welcomed the Supreme Court ruling, saying the government is ready to conduct the elections.

"The ward delimitation and reservation matrix is ready, and the party has already begun the preparations. We have called for applications

from ticket aspirants, identified block-level agents 1 and 2 across Bengaluru city and also submitted the list of additions or deletions to the BLOs, for the first time in Bengaluru," Rajya Sabha member G C Chandrashekhar said.

"Also, the party is connecting with booth committees and guarantee scheme beneficiaries. Soon, the manifesto committee will be formed, and the manifesto will have a clear vision for Bengaluru's development," he added.

The Congress has appointed ministers to oversee preparations across the five corporations - Bengaluru Central (Dinesh Gundu Rao), Bengaluru North (KJ George), Bengaluru East (Krishna Byregowda), Bengaluru West (Byrati Suresh) and Bengaluru South (Ramalinga Reddy).

Deputy Chief Minister-Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D K Shivakumar, who also holds the Bengaluru development portfolio, has said that the party had issued 759 applications to ticket aspirants.

The application forms were priced at Rs 50,000 for the General category and Rs 25,000 for women and Dalits, as the party is raising funds to build a new party office across the state.

Shivakumar had stated that booth-level workers would be given priority. A legal cell would be set up and every booth-, block-level agents would be trained to fight vote theft, he added.

HC refuses to vacate stay on amended excise rules

AMBARISH B
BENGALURU, DHNS

The High Court on Monday rejected the government's application for vacating or modifying the stay order on implementing and enforcing Rules 5 and 5A of Karnataka Excise (Sale of Indian and Foreign Liquors) Rules, 1968.

Justice K S Hemalekha noted serious questions of excess delegation and arbitrariness in the petition and posted matter to Feb 11 for hearing.

Following the rejection of its interlocutory application (IA), the excise department has postponed e-auction of unused liquor licences, scheduled between Jan 13 and 20.

Shantabai of Hubballi and two others had petitioned the Dharwad bench, contending that the newly inserted provisions provide for automatic lapsing and forfeiture of li-

cences, denial of renewal and consequential inclusion of such licences for auction pool, without adjudicatory mechanism.

The court ordered interim stay on the rules on Dec 26. Appearing for the state, advocate general Shashikiran Shetty said the amended rules constitute policy decisions taken in public interest under Sec 71 of Karnataka Excise Act. The amendments are aimed at preventing licences from remaining defunct and augmenting state revenue, he said.

He said the interim stay is causing serious losses to the exchequer and if it is vacated, petitioners can participate in e-auction and no prejudice would be caused to them.

The court said the interim order was passed on a prima facie finding that the amended rules provide for automatic forfeiture and extinction of li-

cence rights, denial of renewal and compulsory inclusion of such licences into an auction pool, all of which entail serious civil consequences and raise substantial issues of excess delegation and arbitrariness.

"The plea of revenue loss, though urged, cannot override judicial scrutiny where serious questions of excess delegation and arbitrariness arise. The balance of convenience, therefore, continues to lie in favour of maintaining protection," the court said.

It said: "The present case stands on a distinct footing as the impugned e-auction notification has been issued and challenge is directed to the vires of the amended rules themselves. Therefore, the said orders do not persuade this court to vacate interim protection granted on 26.12.2025".



IN THE HIGH COURT

DH



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CBI grills Vijay for over 7 hours

Actor denies TVK's role in Karur stampede

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Complete B'luru civic polls by June 30: SC

CJI-led bench clears path for IT capital's 1st municipal elections since 2015

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Supreme Court on Monday told the Karnataka government to complete the elections to five municipal corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area by June 30 this year.

The term of the erstwhile Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), which made way for the GBA, had expired on September 10, 2020.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued the direction to the state government, which was represented by senior advocate A.M. Singhvi and Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty.

The court has also told the authorities to finish publishing the ward-wise reservation list by February 20, saying no further time would be granted.

The direction came after a plea by the state government challenging the high court's December 2020 order that di-

Long-delayed polls now on horizon

Tenure of BBMP expired on Sept 10, 2020

■ Since then, govt-appointed official taking care of day-to-day affairs

■ Now, court says final ward-wise reservation list shall be published by Feb 20

■ SEC says final voters' list could be published by March 16

■ Unlike the previous election, which was held for 198 wards, the upcoming elections will be contested across 369 wards

Supreme Court says no more extension of deadlines



Cong, BJP brace for polls

After the SC ruling, both the Congress and the BJP are bracing for the polls. The Congress said the government was ready to conduct the polls. The BJP, which had opposed the GBA formation, said it was "prepared" to take on the ruling party.

More fresh faces likely

When the civic polls conclude, Bengaluru will have five mayors instead of one. With the size of each ward reduced to more than half as compared to previous polls, not all former councillors are eager to contest, opening the door for fresh faces.

rected the State Election Commission (SEC) to hold BBMP elections expeditiously.

In its affidavit in the apex court on July 20, 2025, the Karnataka government said it would be able to communicate the delimitation notification along with reservation details to the SEC by November 30,

2025, after which the election to the newly constituted city corporations could be held.

The apex court is monitoring the compliance of its earlier orders regarding elections to the BBMP and the newly created municipal corporations under the GBA.

► GBA, Page 4

US to invite India to rare earths, AI initiative to counter China

ANIRBAN BHAIKUM
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Trump administration will next month invite India to join Pax Silica, an initiative led by the US and supported by eight other nations, to counter China's dominance in rare earth mining and refining, and to secure the Artificial Intelligence supply chain.

Notwithstanding the strains in their ties, India and the US will also hold another round of negotiations this week.

The Pax Silica was born out of a meeting hosted by the US in December. Japan, South

The United States and India are bound not just by shared interests, but by a relationship anchored at the highest levels. Real friends can disagree but always resolve their differences in the end

SERGIO GOR

US Ambassador to India



Korea, Singapore, Israel, Australia, the Netherlands, the UAE and the UK joined the US-led initiative during the inaugural conclave itself.

India, however, was not invited despite being a member of the Quad.

Sergio Gor, the newly appointed US envoy to India, said Washington would invite New Delhi to join the Pax Silica next month.

"Pax Silica is a US-led strategic initiative to build a secure, prosperous and innovation-driven silicon supply chain from critical minerals and energy inputs to advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, AI development, and logistics," Gor said at the US embassy in New Delhi on Monday.

► Pax Silica, Page 4

Setback for Isro as PSLV fails for second consecutive time

CHENNAI, DHNS: In a setback for Isro, the PSLV-C62 rocket carrying 16 satellites failed to place them in orbit after encountering an anomaly in the third stage of the launch on Monday.

This is the second consecutive time a PSLV mission has ended in failure, after the PSLV-C61 last year.

The PSLV took off majestically at 10.17 am from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota and the first two stages performed nominally.

However, an anomaly oc-



curred when the rocket was at stage 3, around 203 seconds after lift-off, causing the rocket to not be able to reach its intended orbit.

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CODE IMPACT P 14

TCS net profit down 14% in 3rd quarter

India's largest IT services firm TCS on Monday posted a 14% decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 10,657 crore for the December quarter, compared to Rs 12,380 crore posted in the year-ago period, due to Rs 2,128 crore statutory impact of new labour codes. The company in an exchange filing reported unallocable expenses amounting to Rs 5,309 crore. The company's revenue from operations stood at Rs 67,087 crore.

India, Germany to boost ties in critical minerals, semicon

Visa-free transit for Indian citizens through German airports

NEW DELHI, DHNS

India and Germany have agreed on a semiconductor ecosystem partnership, apart from expanding cooperation in the field of critical minerals, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chancellor Friedrich Merz met in Gandhinagar on Monday.

Merz conveyed to Modi that the citizens of India would now be able to transit through the airports in Germany without requiring visas.

Merz and Modi welcomed the progress between the two countries in bilateral cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, including semiconductors, critical minerals, digitisation, telecommunications, health and the bioeconomy, which consolidates the India-Germany Innovation and Technology Partnership Roadmap.

The two leaders also underlined the significance of enhanced institutional research and industrial collaboration between the Indian and German semiconductor ecosystems.

"The world is changing rapidly. We are seeing how dependence on critical technologies and machinery is being



Chancellor Friedrich Merz and PM Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad. REUTERS

Merz for cutting India's Russia reliance

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Germany wanted a closer security partnership with New Delhi, including deeper "cooperation between our defence industries" to cut India's traditional dependence on Russia for military hardware.

Details on Page 10

weaponised today," Modi said, addressing an India-Germany CEOs Forum, held on the occasion of Merz's visit.

Recognising the importance of resilient supply chains, Modi and Merz noted the progress on fostering collaboration in the field of critical minerals through a Joint Declaration of Intent (JDoI) on Critical Minerals cooperation.

► Germany, Page 4

ON THE BOIL

Ready for war & talks, says Iran amid Trump's warning



Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Monday that his country was prepared for war but also ready to negotiate after President Donald Trump warned that the US might intervene to stop the government's crackdown on opposition protests. Iran also said that communication channels were open between the two countries.

P 12

Dr. Thumbay Moideen
Founder President
Thumbay Group, UAE

مبي

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66 PGs inspected; 10 sealed for poor hygiene

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru South City Corporation officials on Monday sealed 10 Paying Guest (PG) accommodations for failing to maintain hygiene.

Officials inspected 66 PGs across Jayanagar, Bengaluru South, BTM Layout, and Bommanahalli Assembly constituencies.

They checked for basic facilities such as safe drinking water, cleanliness, kitchen hygiene, safety measures, proper toilets, fire safety equipment, CCTV cameras, and FSSAI food safety certification.

A total of Rs 22,500 was collected in fines during the inspection.

"Notices were issued to PG operators to rectify deficiencies within seven days and comply with prescribed norms. As the kitchens of 10 PGs were found to be unhygienic, they have been sealed," the corporation said.

Two suspected Bangladeshi migrants arrested

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Hebbagodi police arrested two persons suspected to be illegal Bangladeshi migrants.

Police have not officially released the names of those arrested. They said the duo were found living illegally at Podu village near Electronics City and working at a scrap shed.

Police suspect the duo entered the country illegally, moved to the city, and obtained fake documents, including Aadhaar, to conceal their nationality.

When questioned, the suspects falsely claimed they were from West Bengal, police said.

Duo steals ATM card by diverting attention; withdraws Rs 1.49 lakh from pension account

Suspects yet to be apprehended

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Indiranagar police are searching for two suspects who allegedly stole the ATM card of a senior citizen, and used it to withdraw Rs 1.49 lakh, savings of the victim's mother-in-law, who receives an army pension.

As per the FIR, on December 30, between 8 and 8.30 pm, the 67-year-old victim was at the Indian Bank ATM on 80 feet road. Each month, he visited ATMs to withdraw about Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 from his 91-year-old mother-in-law's pension account.

"I was trying, but could not withdraw the cash. The two suddenly entered and, pretending to help me, gave random instructions 'to enter the PIN again, try entering it again', and so on," the victim, who requested anonymity, said.



The two men were aged between 26 and 32 and spoke in Hindi, the victim said. "Both my wife and I left af-

ter we could not withdraw the cash. Since the phone number linked to the bank account is my mother-in-law's and she uses a basic feature phone, I rarely check it. However, on January 1, I checked the phone and learnt that Rs 1.49 lakh was withdrawn from the account," the victim said.

He subsequently contacted the bank and, after requesting CCTV footage, saw the duo exchange the ATM card with a replica.

"When the suspects were guiding me, they must have

seen or heard my PIN. Through the bank, I learnt that they withdrew the money in at least three separate transactions in different parts of the city between December 30 and January 1," the victim said.

After verifying with the bank and confirming the jurisdiction, he approached the Indiranagar police. An FIR was registered on January 6 under BNS Section 318 (cheating).

"The suspects are yet to be apprehended. An investigation is underway," a police officer said.

Illegal hoardings return amid festive cheer

Civic authorities admit to lapse in enforcement

BENGALURU, DHNS

With the festival season, illegal hoardings and flexes have returned across the city.

Despite a ban, each festival brings banners and flexes, mostly put up by political leaders and party workers.

Hoardings began appearing in mid-December, with political leaders wishing citizens for Christmas and New Year. Now, Makara Sankranti wishes overflow on to Bengaluru roads.

Corporation officials acknowledged the return of illegal hoardings and said they are trying to remove as many as possible, forming teams with area police to tackle

the problem.

"There is a rise in illegal hoardings. We are constantly removing them and conducting special drives. We plan to set up a task force with police officers to tackle this problem," said Rajendra KV, Commissioner, Bengaluru West City Corporation.

An official from the Bengaluru South City Corporation said the hoardings return even after removal.

"Every time we remove them, they come back after a few days, often at the same spots. We are conducting awareness drives and trying to remove as many as possible."

A resident from Bengaluru North said the hoardings are



Despite the hoarding ban, festival banners return to the city. This flex stands near Lazer Road. DH PHOTO

so regular that people are used to them.

"Last time, there were hoardings for Diwali programmes at a few places. They remained for a long time, and only recently I noticed they were replaced with Sankranti wishes and programmes. It

has become normal now," the resident said.

Officials from other corporations said they could not file cases as they did not know who put up the illegal hoardings. Where they could identify those responsible, cases would be filed.

ITPB metro skywalk inauguration on Jan 16

BENGALURU, DHNS: The skywalk connecting the International Tech Park Bangalore (ITPB) and the Pattandur Agrahara metro station on the Purple Line is ready and will be inaugurated on January 16.

BMRC Managing Director Ravishankar J and Capitaland India Trust CEO Gauri Shankar Nagabhushanam will be present on the occasion.

The facility, expected to help more than 55,000 professionals reach their workplaces directly from the metro station, was constructed by ITPB as per the designs approved by the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRC).

On January 17, 2023, the BMRC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Information Technology Park Limited (ITPL) to provide direct access from the concourse level of the Pattandur Agrahara metro station to ITPB through a walkway.

Techie murder: Police widen probe to examine sexual assault angle

BENGALURU, DHNS

Police await a detailed forensic report to determine if the 34-year-old techie, allegedly strangled and burnt by her teen neighbour for refusing sex, was also raped.

"Without the forensic report, we cannot confirm sexual assault or rape. We are waiting for the report. Based on the findings, appropriate charges will be included in the charge sheet," a senior police officer involved in the investigation said.

What was initially believed to be death from a fire accident turned out to be murder after the police arrested 18-year-old Karnal Kurai on Sunday.

Kurai, a PUC student and

neighbour of the victim, Sharmila DK, allegedly entered her two-bedroom flat in eastern Bengaluru's Subramanya Layout on January 3 and sought sexual favours. When she refused, he allegedly held her mouth and nose, rendering her unconscious.

Kurai then burnt her clothes and other "incriminating evidence" in the vacant bedroom of the victim's roommate, who was away. He fled with her phone as the fire engulfed the house.

Kurai is in police custody as investigators interrogate him. "Technical evidence was key in identifying the culprit. He possessed the victim's mobile phone, which was turned on a few days after the death, helping us trace him," a police investigator said.



Sharmila

B-SMILE gets cracking on 10-flyover project

BENGALURU, DHNS: Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Ltd (B-SMILE) has begun setting up internal teams to execute 10 flyover projects aimed at easing traffic congestion in the city, even as mobility experts question their effectiveness.

In a series of office orders, the government-run agency has assigned individual engineers to oversee each project.

The proposed flyovers have been grouped into three categories based on length — up to 5 km, between 5 km and 10 km, and over 10 km. Projects longer than 10 km are likely to be taken up under a public-private partnership model, with the government providing viability gap funding of up to 40% of the total project cost.

Engineers have been di-

Major routes

The flyovers are planned along key corridors, including Sirsi Circle–Nayandahalli, Yeshwantpur–Halasuru, Adyar Anand Bhavan on Kanakapura Road, Minerva Circle–Hudson Circle, Marenahalli Main Road, MEI Junction, Pipeline Road, Doddaballapur Road and Old Madras Road, among others.



rected to submit reports on existing road conditions and recommend changes to the detailed project reports by January 28. They have also been asked to inform the respective city corporations about the activities proposed along the identified stretches.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

GENERAL

Award and Fellowship Presentation: Inauguration by NS Boseraju; Karnataka Science and Technology Academy; Prof UR Rao Vignyan Bhavan, Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan Road, Vidyanarayana Post; 11 am.

CULTURAL

Dr KG Lakshminarayana felicitations, 'Nisswartha Siri' book release: Inauguration by KC Kondalaih, chaired by Shivraj V Patil; Book release by HP Nagarajiah; Wooday P Krishna, Ramalinga Reddy and HM Revanna; Dr KG Lakshminarayana 75th Commemoration Committee, Annapurna Publishing House; Mahadev Desai Auditorium, Gandhi Bhavan, Kumara Krupa Road; 5 pm.

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with light rain or drizzle

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	25.0°C
Minimum	18.0°C
Rainfall	--
Humidity	95%
Sunset (Jan 13)	6:10 pm
Sunrise (Jan 14)	6:45 am
Moonrise	1:30 am
Moonset	1:00 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5:30 pm) Source: IMD

Karnataka Ameer-e-Shariat passes away

BENGALURU, DHNS: Mou-lana Sagheer Ahmed Rashadi, Ameer-e-Shariat of Karnataka, passed away on Monday.



Moulana Sagheer Ahmed Rashadi

Rector of Darul Uloom Sabeelur Rashad (Arabic College), Tannery Road, he was a leading Muslim religious figure in the state.

Ministers Krishna Byre Gowda and BZ Zameer Ahmed Khan paid their last respects, while Energy Minister and local MLA KJ George expressed his condolences.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will pay his respects at Arabic College at 9.30 am.

The Namaz-e-Janaza (funeral prayers) will be performed at Arabic College at 10 am on Tuesday, followed by burial on the campus.

Invites to be published should be sent to: incitytoday@deccanherald.co.in. Please note that hard copies will not be accepted

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. : 222-S/1/W-II (XEN-BRL-SDAH), Dated: 08.01.2026. Following E-tenders are invited online by Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Sealdah, 2nd Floor, Control Building, DRM Building, Kaizer Street, Kolkata - 700 014 for the following works: **Tender No.:** TN-170-25-26. **Name of the Work:** Provision for re-girding of Br. No X-13 both UP and DOWN in Kankurgachi Chord section of Sealdah Division and Provision for re-girding of Br. No.1CP between Dum Dum Jn.-Patipukur in Circular Railway of Sealdah Division. **Tender value:** Rs. 5,35,63,583.60. **EMD:** Rs. 4,17,800/- **Completion period for the work:** 12 (Twelve) months. **Date & Time of Closing of Tender:** 06.02.2026 at 15.00 hrs. **Date & Time of Opening of Tender:** 06.02.2026 at 15.30 hrs. The Tender Documents and other details are available at website www.irops.gov.in. The bidding is to be submitted through the e-tendering on above website. Manual offers will be summarily rejected. As per Indian Railway Standard General Conditions of Contract 2022, cost of e-Tender Form is Nil.

SDAH-350/2025-26
Tender Enquiries are also available at Website www.e-indianrailways.gov.in/www.irops.gov.in

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KIA sees 43.82 million passengers in 2025

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) recorded an 8% increase in passenger traffic in 2025.

The figure rose from 40.73 million in 2024 to 43.82 million in 2025.

A statement from the management said the airport recorded its highest-ever single-day passenger count of 1,37,317 on November 23.

Air Traffic Movements (ATM) peaked at 837 on October 19, and the average daily

figure for the year was 765.

The daily international departures increased from 38 in 2024 to 51 in 2025. KIA is connected to 113 passenger destinations, including 79 domestic and 34 international cities.

"CY 2025 was a demanding year for India's aviation sector, marked by volatility alongside recovery. BLR Airport was no exception.

"What distinguished the year for us was a disciplined and resilient response, main-

taining operational stability, supporting airline partners, and strengthening network connectivity.

"As the year progressed, we responsibly and strategically scaled both passenger and cargo operations, focusing on future readiness," said Girish Nair, Chief Operating Officer, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL).

The airport handled 5,20,985 metric tonnes of cargo in 2025, a 5% year-on-year increase over 2024.

Now, book KSRTC tickets at BangaloreOne centres

BENGALURU, DHNS: Passengers can now book KSRTC bus tickets at BangaloreOne and KarnatakaOne centres operated by the Directorate of Electronic Delivery of Citizen Services (EDCS).

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) said the service would

be available at 161 BangaloreOne centres in Bengaluru city and at 1,021 KarnatakaOne centres in district and taluk headquarters.

For assistance or reservation-related queries, passengers may contact the KSRTC's call centre at 080-26252625 (24/7) or the AWATAR cell at

7760990034/7760990035 (7 am to 10 pm) or the BangaloreOne call centre at 080-49203888.

This will be in addition to the advance reservation facility available on the KSRTC website and app, department and franchisee counters, as per the press release.

R-DAY EDITION

Lalbagh flower show to honour Poornachandra Tejaswi

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Glass House at Lalbagh will become a floral tribute to late Kannada litterateur and naturalist KP Poornachandra Tejaswi.

The 219th Republic Day edition of the Lalbagh Flower Show, themed 'Tejaswi Vismaya', is from January 14 to 26.

The exhibition will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, said M Jagadeesh, Additional Director of Horticulture (Parks and Gardens), and Horticulture Secretary G Girish.

The 13-day event, a hallmark of the city's Republic Day celebrations, is expected to draw over 11 lakh visitors.

The centrepiece is a central installation inside the Glass House reflecting 'Tejaswi's connection with the Western Ghats, including a floral mountain, waterfall and replica of his house, 'Niruttar'.

Characters from his novel 'Karvalo' are recreated using over five lakh flowers and 2.4 lakh plants.

"For the first time in the state, two flower tableaux will circulate around the Glass House," said Jagadeesh.

Other highlights include a 12-foot vertical garden titled 'Mantra Mangalya' and a thread-art portrait of the author.



Workers make final preparations for the 219th Republic Day flower show at Lalbagh, Bengaluru, on Monday. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Security & logistics

Given the expected footfall, 136 CCTV cameras and five surveillance towers have been installed. A plastic ban is in effect. Visitors are encouraged to use the metro to avoid congestion. Tickets are priced at Rs 80 for adults on weekdays and Rs 100 on weekends. Children's entry is Rs 30. School students in uniform may enter free on working days. Digital ticketing is available through the Karnataka Horticulture portal to ensure a queue-free experience.

Beyond the Glass House

The exhibition extends across the 240-acre park with several specialised attractions.

- **National wood carving camp:** 50 master sculptors are transforming fallen heritage trees into permanent art.
- **Tribal life:** An installation depicting the Soliga tribe of Biligirirangana Hills.
- **Military display:** A three-day exhibition of modern military equipment by the DS Forces.
- **Plant fair:** Over 125 stalls offering seeds, tools, and organic farming demonstrations.

Floral art competitions and displays

To complement the main theme, the Department of Horticulture has organised several flower-based art competitions.

- Ikebana and Japanese floral art.
- Thai Art and vegetable carving.
- Flower Rangoli (Pushpa Rangoli).

Those interested can collect application forms from the Office of the Additional Director of Horticulture (Planning), Lalbagh, between 10 am and 5 pm. The application fee is Rs 100. The deadline for submission is January 14.

DH

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(late receipt, non receipt or irregular supply of newspaper)

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TENDER NOTICE

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- For supply of Radio-Diagnosis items to KRJS Medical College & Research Center at kasavanahalli.

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For more details, Visit our website
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SOUTHERN RAILWAY

SALEM DIVISION (SIGNAL & TELECOM BRANCH)

E-tender Notice No. SA-SG-120-I-OT-19-2025 Dated 07.01.2026

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Southern Railway/Salem Division, Salem-636005 for and on behalf of the President of India Invites ONLINE tenders for the following works as per tender notice given in our e-tender portal www.irops.gov.in The tenderer(s)/contractor(s) intending to apply for e-tender for WORKS in Salem Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal www.irops.gov.in and only online tenders will be accepted. Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) & Tender Document Cost (TDC), in respect of e-tendering, should be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. Fixed Deposit Receipt(FDR) will not be accepted as EMD for tenders invited on IREPS(e-tender portal).

Tender Notice No:	SA-SG-120-I-OT-19-2025
Name of Work:	Salem Division: Enhancing the Training Facilities at ZSTTC/PTJ
Approximate Cost of the Work:	82.23,297.55
Earnest Money Deposit:	1,64,500.00
Cost of tender form Including Tax:	Nil
Eligibility criteria for similar single work previously executed:	Applicable
Period of Completion in months:	6 Months
Tender closing date and time:	29.01.2026 at 15.00 Hrs.

NOTE: Details of approximate value of tender, tender form cost, EMD & location are given on the e-portal, www.irops.gov.in For other details, terms and conditions, the tenders are advised to refer to the Tender documents which are available at www.irops.gov.in website.

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Southern Railway/Salem-636 005



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While Cong braces for states' polls, K'taka deadlock remains

High command can't alienate Ahinda voters or Vokkaligas

PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Will he or will he not step down? Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who broke the record of Karnataka's longest-serving chief minister on January 7 by surpassing D Devaraj Urs, is preparing to break another record by tabling his 17th budget.

But even as these personal records stack up, they have sharpened the intrigue over the much-talked-about power transfer under the alleged

'secret' 50-50 formula, with Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar waiting for the party high command's signal.

Speculation of an October-November 'Kranti' fell flat. Last year, Siddaramaiah's induction into the AICC's OBC advisory council was seen as an attempt to pave the way for a "smooth" transition. This time, AICC's decision to appoint Shivakumar as observer to poll-bound Assam has effectively put brakes on any elevation — at least until Siddaramaiah presents the budget.

Say AICC sources, this Sankranti may mark not just the Sun's shift but also a change of course for Karnataka Congress, with the high command likely to bring both leaders to the negotiating table for one-to-one talks, to weigh the pros and cons and time any move to minimise political and electoral fallout.

The party's diktats—against caste-based conventions like Siddaramotsava, dinner meetings amid the Dalit CM demand, and public show-downs—have failed to end internal bickering. Repeated displays of camaraderie, claims of "no differences," Shivakumar's pledge of party loyalty, and even 'breakfast diplomacy' before the winter session were largely optics, say insiders, as resentment simmered in both camps.

As the Congress braces for five crucial elections—Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala, Puducherry and West Bengal—it faces an even bigger challenge in resolving the Karnataka deadlock. The power tussle between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar has handed the opposition ammunition, led to bureaucratic complacency and growing animosity within the party.

Siddaramaiah, a Kuruba strongman and popular Ahinda leader, brings vast administrative experience. Shivakumar, a Vokkaliga heavyweight, is a Gandhi family loyalist and master strategist. The party's landslide 2023 victory was under their joint leadership.

The high command cannot afford to alienate Ahinda voters or Vokkaligas, who shifted from the JD(S) hoping to see

Shivakumar as CM. Past backlash from abrupt CM removals—Devaraj Urs, Veerendra Patil, and B S Yediyurappa—also weighs heavily.

While sections of the central leadership back Siddaramaiah, fears of a Vokkaliga backlash and demoralising party loyalists persist.

"Treiterate—efforts may fail, but not prayers," Shivakumar said recently, an apparent message to the leadership.

Change appears inevitable. Siddaramaiah, who once dismissed any power pact, has turned pensive: "Let me see how long I will last."

With both camps quietly mobilising MLAs, Karnataka may soon see either a change of guard or a fierce resistance—one that could redefine state politics and the futures of its two tallest leaders.

Kharge taunts DKS over neglect of Kalyana Karnataka

'Give at least 75% of grants you take to your constituencies'

KALABURAGI, DHNS

Taunting Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar over his statement that he wished he was born in Kalyana Karnataka owing to flow of funds following the implementation of Article 371(J) of the Constitution, AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Monday, "It's not necessary for you (DKS) to be born here, nor for us to be born in your region (Kanakapura/Mysuru)."

Kharge added: "We don't want to become like London or Singapore or America. All we want is at least 75% of the



AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, CM Siddaramaiah, minister Sharan Prakash Patil and others take part in foundation laying ceremony for various development projects in Yadrami town of Kalaburagi district on Monday.

development your constituency or Mysuru has seen. That's enough for us."

Kharge said this reacting to Shivakumar's statement during the foundation laying ceremony for various projects in Yadrami.

The deputy chief minister, expressing his happiness over the flow of funds for the development of Kalyana Karnataka

under Article 371J, wished that he was born in the region to enjoy the fruits of special status.

Discrimination in grants
Expressing his displeasure over the discrimination in sanctioning of grants, Kharge said, "You (certain constituencies in south Karnataka) took the lion's share in grants in a buffet system while we (Kalyana Karnataka) have to wait in line for leftovers in Pankthi Oota."

Teachers' shortage
Stating that the people from Mysuru and Bengaluru are getting quality education and job opportunities, Kharge said the government schools in Kalyana Karnataka are facing severe shortage of teachers.

He urged School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa to give priority to the region while recruiting teachers.

"Development will not be possible without filling vacant posts of the teachers. The children of poor, farmers and working classes in rural areas in our region are not availing of quality education in the absence of teachers. Therefore, people from the region are migrating to Bengaluru to get education," he said.

State science academy to confer awards today

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Karnataka Science and Technology Academy (KSTA), under the Department of Science and Technology, will host an award and fellowship presentation ceremony at 11 am on Tuesday.

The event will honour eminent scientists, technologists and science communicators for their outstanding contributions to science and society, the KSTA said.

The Prof CNR Rao-KSTA Lifetime Achievement Award will be conferred on Dr Ramakrishna, former Director of the Zoological Survey of India, in recognition of his distinguished service to science.

The award carries a gold medal worth Rs 2 lakh and Rs 1 lakh in cash. The KSTA Lifetime Achievement Award in Science Communication in Kannada 2023 will be presented to Sreemathi Hariprasad, former scientist at CFTRI, for her role in popularising science in Kannada. It comes with a gold medal worth Rs 1 lakh and Rs 75,000 in cash.

In addition, 33 academicians, researchers, engineers and technologists, including Dr R R Hanchinal, Dr K N Ganeshaiah, Dr Vasundhara Bhupati, Jayadeva G S, Wooday P Krishna and Dr Hulikal Nataraj, will be honoured as Fellows of KSTA (FKSTA) for 2023 across diverse disciplines.

Cong will fight for MGNREGA till the end, says Kharge

BENGALURU, DHNS: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday said his party would "fight till the end" against the repealing of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

"MGNREGA was the right to work. As per Article 41 under the Directive Principles, it was enacted as a law under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi during the Manmohan Singh government. They (BJP government) have struck down an Act that was intended to help the poor," Kharge told reporters.

The new Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act will "obstruct" the functioning of panchayats, Kharge said.

"With a cost-sharing ratio of 60:40, an additional financial burden of 30% is being placed on the states.

The earlier cost-sharing ratio was 90:10," Kharge said. He also accused the Modi administration of targeting UPA-era schemes like the Right to Education, Right to Food Security and now the Right to Work. "They want to stop these schemes from reaching the poor," he said.

Kharge also rubbished claims that the VB-G RAM G Act was introduced to fight corruption under the MGNREGA. "The Centre itself conducts audits... The Comptroller & Auditor General has said that the MGNREGA helped create assets, lakes, roads, school buildings and anganwadis," he said, dubbing the BJP as "anti-people."

"Instead of helping the poor, PM Modi is giving away the country's resources to big corporates," Kharge said. "We're fighting against it and the fight will continue."

We'll call Siddu, DKS when necessary, says AICC chief

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar held talks with Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday amid speculation that the party high command may schedule a meeting to discuss the leadership tussle in the state.

There is a buzz that the high command may call Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar to New Delhi after Sankranthi to 'settle' their leadership dispute.

While it was a closed-door meeting, it is widely believed that Shivakumar pressed for resolution of his tug of war with Siddaramaiah. "As and when there's a necessity, we'll call them," Kharge said when asked if the top brass would call Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for talks. Shivakumar met Kharge at his Sadashivanagar residence.

Sources close to Shivakumar said he may visit the national capital on January 16 for a meeting to discuss the upcoming election in Assam, where he has been appointed as an observer.

On January 22, Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar may be called for a meeting to discuss the Congress' agitation against the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) Act.

Meanwhile, top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is likely to arrive in Mysuru for a brief layover on Tuesday. Both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar may receive him. It is possible that they may broach the topic with Rahul.

Worker crushed to death in sugar factory
SANKESHWAR (BELAGAVI DISTRICT): A worker was killed in sugarcane crushing unit of Hiranyakeshi Cooperative Sugar Factory in the town on Monday. The deceased has been identified as Sachin Basappa Dyamanni (38). His trouser got stuck in the machine and he fell on the belt and was crushed to death.

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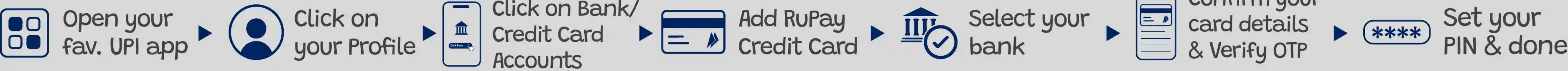


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Course suspension undermines equality

The National Medical Commission (NMC)'s decision to withdraw its permission for the 2025-26 MBBS batch in the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence in Jammu and Kashmir is wrong and clearly driven by non-academic considerations. It is to be noted that the course received the NMC nod just four months ago, after the infrastructure and amenities in the college were found to have met the stipulated standards. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had, in 2016, inaugurated the state-of-the-art super speciality hospital attached to the college. The commission, after a hurried visit to the college this month, cited inadequacy in "faculty strength, clinical material, and infrastructure" to withdraw the approval. This followed a protest by Hindutva groups against the preponderance of Muslim students in the first batch – 42 in a class of 50.

These students secured admission in the college after appearing for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET). They earned their seats on merit in a national-level examination. But the admission of a higher number of Muslim students led to protests from Hindutva outfits, who formed a resistance group on the matter. The protesting students were backed by the BJP, and the matter was taken to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. One argument put forward by the Hindutva groups is that educational institutions established by the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board are funded through offerings made to Mata Vaishno Devi. But the admissions were done based on established rules and procedures, and the college is not defined by law as a minority institution.

The NMC succumbed to political pressure arising from communal considerations to withdraw the recognition it had granted to the college. It violated the best-regulatory norms and practices in a decision that goes against academic autonomy. It is an act of discrimination based on religion and a violation of the Constitutional guarantee of equality. The NMC did not issue a show-cause notice to the college before the withdrawal of permission, and there is no provision for appeal. The decision against a college set up to promote medical education and healthcare in Kashmir counters promises made to the people of the Union Territory, following the abrogation of Article 370, that their interests would be protected and promoted. It undermines the credibility of the NMC as a regulatory body. While there is a move to accommodate the students in other colleges, it will not right the wrong that has been committed. It would only underline the unjustness of the commission's decision.

The withdrawal of permission to the J&K medical college is discriminatory and furthers political interests

Privilege on roads must be switched off

The Bengaluru Traffic Police's ongoing crackdown on illegal lights is a welcome step towards reclaiming basic road discipline. Booking over 1,000 motorists for using unauthorised LED bars, high-intensity headlights, and red-and-blue strobe lights signals an overdue intent to treat public roads as shared civic spaces, rather than arenas of intimidation. The legal position is unambiguous. The Indian Motor Vehicles Act and the Central Motor Vehicles Rules prohibit private vehicles from using multi-coloured lights, red or blue flashers, and high-intensity lamps. Rules 106 and 108 require headlights to be properly deflected and reserve emergency-style lighting exclusively for authorised services such as ambulances, fire engines, and police vehicles on duty. Violations attract penalties, prosecution, and immediate removal of the illegal fittings.

More troubling is the systemic harm caused by such misuse. Blinding lights destabilise traffic flow, induce panic braking and momentary loss of vision, increasing the risk of collisions. But the gravest consequence is the 'cry wolf' effect: when strobe lights become commonplace on private cars, two-wheelers, and commercial vehicles alike, motorists stop responding instinctively, delaying passage for genuine emergency vehicles where every second can mean the difference between life and death. The persistence of this practice stems from a toxic culture of power signalling – what sociologists describe as a "Raj Mentality", mimicking the colonial era where British rulers enjoyed physical and legal separation from their subjects. Strobe lights have become portable badges of importance, deployed to bully, bypass queues, and assert dominance on the road. The Supreme Court has rightly noted how the illegal use of these lights dilutes the authority of responders during genuine crises. This culture of VIP racism and road apartheid is reinforced when elected representatives, including MPs, MLAs, and even former corporators, openly use such lights without consequence. Selective enforcement against ordinary motorists while politically connected violators go untouched only deepens public cynicism. If the law is to command respect, it must apply upward as rigorously as it does downward.

The problem extends far beyond Bengaluru, reflecting a nationwide failure to dismantle visible privilege on public roads. The Centre must issue a clarification on who can use such lights, and Directors General of Police across states must enforce it without exemptions. By cracking down on illegal lights, the Bengaluru police, particularly the West division, have struck at a deeper ethos of entitlement. Ending illegal lights is not about aesthetics or legal compliance; it is about equality before the law. Switching off these lights is a necessary step towards switching off a dangerous mindset.

The crackdown on illegal vehicle lights needs to be extended as a larger drive against power signalling

Climate resilience cannot be built by policy alone. It should be introduced as a part of foundational learning

SHUKLA BOSE

India is living through a moment of extraordinary ecological fragility. Every summer is hotter than the last, every monsoon more unpredictable, and every news cycle carries a story of vanishing wetlands, dying lakes, or forests cleared for development. Just the other day, one read the heartbreaking news of a herd of elephants being mowed down by the Rajdhani train. One can ask questions about who was intruding on whose territory.

Climate change has become the silent backdrop of our daily lives. Yet our educational approach still treats environmental learning as a peripheral topic – a chapter in a textbook, a unit to be memorised, or a one-day "environment awareness" programme. What we urgently need, instead, is a profound shift in mindset: climate education must begin at the age of five. Waiting until adolescence or adulthood to introduce ecological thinking is not just ineffective; it is irresponsible.

Much of the world is now trying to retrofit climate education into its school systems. Europe, often seen as environmentally conscious, integrated climate literacy into early childhood education only after decades of ecological degradation. Finland's celebrated National Core Curriculum, which embeds ecological thinking from pre-primary years, and Norway's tradition of *friluftsliv* – outdoor life as a pedagogical approach – are the results of learning born from loss. The UK's recent Nature Park initiative, launched to bring biodiversity mapping and climate literacy into schools, came after dramatic declines in species and forest cover. In these nations, nature education is a corrective, a way to repair damage that has already taken place.

India still has something precious left – its forests, coastal ecosystems, wetlands, and astonishing biodiversity. But these are slipping away faster than most people realise. UNESCO has recorded that nearly one-third of India's natural wetlands have disappeared. The IPBES Global Assessment notes steep declines in species and habitats across the subcontinent. In the Western Ghats, habitat loss in several districts is shockingly high, between 70% and 80%. If we

FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

India must raise climate custodians in its schools

do not cultivate in our children a sense of belonging to the natural world, no policy, mission, or strategy will be enough.

The most compelling reason to begin climate education early comes from developmental psychology and neuroscience. Research by scholars such as Louise Chawla shows that early experiences with nature strongly influence pro-environmental attitudes in adulthood. Children who develop emotional affinity with the natural world are far more likely to grow into adults who conserve, protect, and advocate. Neuroscience also reinforces that empathy – for humans, animals, and ecosystems – has a developmental window in early child-



hood. If that window is missed, behavioural change becomes more difficult later. In other words, the foundations of environmental responsibility must be laid before the age of seven.

Studies in *Nature Climate Change* show that even primary-school children can comprehend the basic patterns of climate change when taught through observation and storytelling. More importantly, they internalise these lessons emotionally. They connect their own daily experiences – heat, rain, polluted lakes, disappearing birds – to broader environmental shifts. To them, climate change is not an abstraction, but something they witness.

However, urban childhood today is lived among cement, screens, and traffic. Many children have never walked barefoot on grass, watched a butterfly emerge, or seen a clear night sky. Their idea of a river is a polluted canal; their understanding of a lake is a fenced, algae-covered reservoir. When nature becomes a distant concept rather than a lived reality, the instinct to protect it weakens. This is a generational problem.

It was in response to these realities that we created Parikrma Oxygen, a nature school for underserved children.

Many of our children live in dense slum communities with no access to green spaces. Their sense of ecology is shaped by scarcity: of clean water, clean air, or open land. For them, nature education must be experiential and immersive. The learning happens outdoors. Children observe plants, insects, birds, and soil; they track changes in rainfall; they learn how lakes breathe and how waste travels; they grow and care for native species; they watch compost become soil. Slowly, they begin to notice patterns. They begin to ask questions. They begin to care. These transformations come not from lectures, but from daily contact and emotional connection.

The window is closing

The idea is to create a generation of climate custodians; children who do not see nature as separate from themselves but as part of their identity. We cannot build a resilient future if conservation remains the domain of scientists and policymakers alone. India needs a citizenry that intuitively understands why trees matter, why water bodies need protection, and why biodiversity is not decorative but essential. This shift requires mass environmental literacy, not specialised expertise. And mass literacy can only be built in schools.

The National Education Policy 2020 already emphasises experiential learning, curiosity, and foundational skills. Climate education should sit at the centre of this vision. Imagine a future in which every school – urban or rural – has a small biodiversity garden, a weather observation log, a composting corner, or a student-run nature journal. If India integrates climate learning into the curriculum from pre-primary years, it can produce a generation more equipped to face and solve the environmental challenges ahead than today's adults ever were.

The window for action is small. If we wait until deforestation accelerates further or until climate shocks deepen, we will be left teaching children about ecosystems that no longer exist. We can raise a generation that grows up seeing the environment not as an academic topic but as a living, breathing part of their daily lives. We can raise citizens who will fight for rivers, trees, forests, and species because they grew up loving them. The question is not whether we can afford to bring climate education into early childhood. The question is whether we can afford not to.

(The writer is the founder and CEO of the Parikrma Humanity Foundation, which runs Parikrma Oxygen, a nature school for underserved children)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

A complaint that didn't fly

As I was leaving, still seething, the headmistress fired the final salvo

WG CDR A N VERMA (RETD)

Fifty years ago, I was posted to the VIP Squadron of the Indian Air Force at Palam, in Delhi Cantonment. My four-year-old son was admitted to the KG class of the local Army School. This was an era when strict discipline was widely accepted in schools and rarely questioned by parents.

As first-time parents, my wife and I had made thoughtful preparations to make the idea of school appealing to our son, Ullas. Initially, he showed enough excitement, but it waned rapidly once he began attending classes. We struggled on, hoping that school would soon become routine and that he would settle down. Two months passed, and the situation remained deeply unpleasant for us.

My wife persisted in trying to find the reason for his reluctance, but Ullas remained silent. Finally, after much coaxing, he told us that his class teacher had slapped him for the slightest mischief.

We were furious. This experience defied everything we had learnt about parenting. I asked my wife to speak to the class teacher, but she hesitated, fearing it might worsen matters for young Ullas rather than solve them. Eventually, I assured her that I would take the onerous task upon myself.

I took time off from my office and went to the school, hoping to persuade the teacher to be more gentle. But I ran into an unexpected hurdle.

The class teacher remained quite stern. Apparently, she found Ullas quite naughty. When I explained that my son had begun to dislike school and created quite a daily fuss while being sent off, she remained nonchalant. "That's your problem; you solve it," she said. "I have a whole bunch of naughty kids. When I fail to persuade them to behave themselves, I am left with no choice except to pull

their ears or give them a mild knock."

I insisted that such conduct was outdated and that modern teaching discouraged physical punishment. But the class teacher stuck to her guns. I then threatened to complain to the headmistress. "You are most welcome," she replied calmly.

I was left with no choice but to raise the level. The headmistress too gave a short shrift to my complaint. "This is an Army school," she said. "We don't believe in sparing the rod and spoiling the child."

I was taken aback. I shot my final challenge. "Ma'am, I often fly the COAS (Chief of the Army Staff). On such occasions, the GOC Delhi Area comes to see him off and receive him. The next time he comes, I shall tell him about your regressive attitude."

She remained unperturbed. "Go right ahead," she said.

As I was leaving, still seething in a fit of rage, she added casually, "And just for your information, the GOC Delhi Area is my husband."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

People's movement is necessary for systemic correction

The A T Ramaswamy Report, 2007, exposed the grabbing of tens of thousands of acres of government land. However, successive governments have done little to recover the encroached land from powerful politicians who have enriched themselves with impunity ('Land grab: Don't spare the powerful', Jan 12). Historically, the powerful have managed to stay above the law. The 2007 expose of vast areas of government land being encroached upon indicates that nobody or no institution has been held

accountable, proof enough of the miasma of corruption that has enveloped us. Kogilu and Thanisandra are only symptoms of a well-oiled informal land market where underworld or local muscle men, politicians, and corrupt officials operate. Forest lands are snatched in the name of development, displacing original dwellers who protected the forest. Unless a massive movement by citizens takes place, systemic correction cannot occur.

HR Babu Satyanarayana, Mysuru

Don't commodify tigers

I refer to 'Reimagining tiger safaris' (Jan 12). The article incisively critiques the commodification of tiger safaris, revealing how tourism-led conservation undermines ecological balance and animal welfare. Conservation policy must be grounded in scientific regulation rather than market-driven imperatives disguised as sustainability. Gauri Tailong, Bengaluru

QR for safety

Apropos 'QR code display cards mandatory in Bengaluru autos' (Jan

12), the mandatory display of QR code cards in autos is a welcome step. It will ensure better safety and accountability. The government must run awareness campaigns to educate commuters to insist on QR code cards in autos or raise a complaint with the authorities concerned. A deadline should be announced before which auto owners must install the code cards. A K Shariff, Mysuru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: letters@deccanherald.co.in (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

People from UP and Bihar should understand that Hindi is not their language. I do not hate the language. But if you try to impose it, I will kick you...

Raj Thackeray, MNS chief



Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in the world, but has not solved one yet.

Maya Angelou

TO BE PRECISE

Donald Trump declares himself "Acting President of Venezuela"

WON BY A LANDSLIDE-EVERY OIL BARREL BACKED ME!



IN PERSPECTIVE

Iran's unrest, India's caution

New Delhi's imperative must be in de-risking critical strategic interests, including the Chabahar Port

ANAND KUMAR

The wave of protests across Iran marks one of the most serious internal challenges the Islamic Republic has faced in recent years. What began as demonstrations against currency collapse and economic mismanagement has rapidly escalated into a political crisis, with protesters openly demanding regime change. The scale, intensity, and persistence of the unrest, combined with growing international scrutiny, place Iran at a precarious juncture. For India, this crisis is not a distant internal upheaval; it has direct implications for its strategic, economic, and geopolitical interests in West and Central Asia.

Iran's economic crisis has been building for years, driven by structural weaknesses, corruption, sanctions, and policy failures. The sharp fall of the rial, rising food prices, and widespread unemployment triggered protests in Tehran in late December, before spreading nationwide. What distinguishes this protest cycle from earlier ones is its swift evolution from economic grievances into overtly political demands. Slogans targeting the clerical establishment and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reflect a deepening crisis of legitimacy that the regime is struggling to contain.

The State's response has been uncompromising. Iranian authorities have launched a securitised crackdown involving mass arrests, intimidation, and lethal force. Human rights organisations report dozens of deaths, including those of minors, though exact figures remain difficult to verify due to repeated nationwide internet shutdowns. The judiciary has issued stark warnings, with Iran's Attorney General declaring that protesters could be treated as "enemies of God", a charge that carries the death penalty. The army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps have described security as a "red line", vowing to protect strategic infrastructure and warning citizens against alleged foreign-backed plots.

Yet, beneath this show of force, there are visible divisions within the Iranian leadership. President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for restraint, while the judiciary, security forces, and the Supreme Leader have adopted a hardline stance. This lack of internal consensus weakens the regime's ability to manage the crisis and risks further alienating an already disillusioned population. The imposition of repeated internet blackouts reflects the leadership's anxiety about losing control of both the narrative and the streets.

The protests have also acquired symbolic and organisational dimensions that heighten the regime's unease. Demonstrators have waved Shah-era flags bearing the lion and sun and displayed images of Reza Pahlavi, the son of the deposed monarch. The symbolism of monarchy in the protests signals a rejection of the Islamic Republic's ideological foundations rather than a call for limited reform. International reactions have complicated Tehran's calculations, with the US adopting sharp rhetoric; European countries, Australia, and Canada condemning repression; and Iran blaming the US and Israel for fomenting unrest. While direct military intervention remains unlikely, the convergence of internal protests, diplomatic pressure, and economic vulnerability has placed Iran in one of its most fragile positions in years, developments that merit close attention from India, given its stakes in Iran's stability.

A measured distance

India's foremost concern is the Chabahar Port project, in which it has invested nearly \$500 million as a strategic gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe, bypassing Pakistan. Prolonged instability in Iran threatens the project's timelines and strategic value, particularly the Chabahar-Zahedan railway, with labour disruptions, internet shutdowns, and supply-chain interruptions already highlighting its vulnerability. Sustained unrest could also allow China to expand its influence, weakening India's regional and maritime posture. Beyond connectivity, India's energy interests are also at stake, as the political turmoil in Iran could disrupt regional energy dynamics and constrain future cooperation.

Against this backdrop, New Delhi's diplomatic approach has been cautious and pragmatic. India has maintained engagement with Iran's political leadership, seeking to insulate strategic cooperation from short-term turbulence. As chair of BRICS in 2026 and a prominent voice of the Global South, India occupies a unique position. It enjoys working relations with Iran, the US, and key regional players, enabling it to act as an interlocutor rather than a partisan actor at a time of heightened tensions.

Ultimately, Iran's crisis underscores the long-term strategic costs of economic mismanagement and political rigidity. Economic collapse, mass protests, and international pressure have together created a volatile situation with uncertain outcomes. For India, the challenge lies in safeguarding its strategic interests without becoming entangled in Iran's internal conflict or great-power rivalries. Sustained engagement, strategic patience, and contingency planning will be essential as New Delhi navigates the fallout from one of the most consequential political moments Iran has faced in recent years.

(The writer is an associate fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses)

Warkari movement: The forgotten blueprint of egalitarian statecraft

ANIL JAIHIND

In an age when nations compete not merely on military strength but on social cohesion, moral legitimacy, and the creative energies of their people, it is worth revisiting a remarkable chapter from India's own history. Maharashtra's Warkari movement—rooted in devotion, equality, and collective ethics—did more than shape spiritual life. It helped build one of the sub-continent's most egalitarian social orders. It is no coincidence that from this very soil emerged Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the architect of a resilient, prosperous, and people-centric *swarajya*.

The argument is simple yet profound: an egalitarian society is not a moral luxury; it is a strategic necessity for building a powerful nation. Maharashtra's history offers one of the clearest demonstrations of this truth.

Long before the rise of the Maratha Empire, the Warkari movement had begun transforming the social landscape. Saints such as Dnyaneshwar, Namdev,

Chokhamela, Eknath, Tukaram, and Bahinabai challenged the rigid caste hierarchies and ritual exclusivity. Their message was radical for its time: every human being, regardless of birth, is equally capable of devotion, dignity, and moral worth.

This was not merely a spiritual doctrine; it was a social revolution.

The Warkari tradition fostered shared spaces where all castes ate, walked, and worshipped together. It promoted a moral code centred on humility, service, and collectivity. Through *bhakti*, poetry and pilgrimage, it created a cultural identity that transcended caste boundaries. It also nurtured decentralised communities bound by mutual respect rather than hierarchy.

In effect, the Warkari movement democratised social relations centuries before the arrival of modern political democracy.

When Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj emerged in the 17th century, he did not rise in a vacuum. He rose from a society already primed to reject inequality and embrace collective empowerment. The Warkari

movement had prepared the psychological and cultural ground for Swarajya.

Shivaji Maharaj's genius lay in converting this social capital into political power.

First, the Warkari ethos had instilled a sense of dignity as a birthright. A population that believes in its own worth is far more willing to defend its land and its freedom. This made people receptive to Shivaji Maharaj's call for Swarajya—self-rule rooted in justice and honour.

Second, his administration drew talent from across society—Marathas, Kunbis, Malis, Mahars, Brahmins, Muslims, and others. This inclusivity was not an accident; it reflected the Warkari tradition that valued ability over birth. The result was a meritocratic State machinery that often outperformed many of its contemporaries.

Third, Warkari emphasis on *seva* translated into a culture of collective responsibility. Local communities took ownership of defence, agriculture, water management, and justice. Shivaji Maharaj's governance—anchored in forts, panchayats, and local mil-

itias—thrived because society was already disciplined and community-oriented.

Finally, his rule derived moral legitimacy rather than fear. His commitment to justice, protection of women, respect for all faiths, and fair taxation resonated deeply with a population shaped by Warkari ethics. This legitimacy inspired extraordinary loyalty—something no empire can secure through force alone.

The Maratha polity that emerged was not only militarily formidable but also economically vibrant, and egalitarianism played a direct role in this prosperity.

Agricultural productivity rose because peasants felt secure and respected. Trade flourished as local communities cooperated rather than competed along caste lines. Innovation and social mobility expanded because talent was not restricted by birth. Women participated more actively in social and economic life, strengthening households and communities.

In short, the Warkari-inspired social order created a broad base of empowered cit-

izens—the true engine of any strong State.

Maharashtra's history offers a timeless lesson: a nation becomes powerful not by concentrating privilege, but by distributing dignity.

Egalitarianism is not merely a moral ideal; it is a strategic tool of governance.

Social equality creates national unity. When people feel respected, they identify with the nation; when they feel excluded, they withdraw or resist. The Warkari movement's inclusive ethos enabled society to rally behind a leader like Shivaji Maharaj.

Meritocracy strengthens institutions. Shivaji Maharaj's administration thrived because it drew from the widest possible talent pool. Modern India, too, becomes stronger when opportunity reaches every caste, region, and class.

Moral legitimacy enhances State power. A State rooted in justice commands loyalty; a State perceived as unequal breeds resentment. Moral authority is a form of political capital.

Cultural cohesion drives economic

growth. Shared values reduce social friction, enabling cooperation, innovation, and prosperity.

If India seeks to become a global power in the 21st century, it must remember the formula that once made Maharashtra formidable: egalitarian society—>empowered citizens -->strong institutions -->prosperous and powerful State.

This is not nostalgia; it is strategic wisdom drawn from our own past.

The Warkari movement showed that social equality can be built from the ground up. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj demonstrated that such a society can produce extraordinary political leadership. Together, they proved that egalitarianism is not just a social virtue—it is statecraft.

As India debates its future, this lesson deserves renewed attention. A nation that invests in dignity, justice, and equal opportunity does not weaken itself. It strengthens itself.

(The writer is the chairman of Congress's OBC department)

President Claudia Sheinbaum and her ministers have been grappling with the right tone to adopt in the country's response to the Venezuela strike for fear of antagonising the US

PAULINA VILLEGAS AND JAMES WAGNER

Since President Donald Trump took office and began pressing Mexico to crack down on drug cartels, President Claudia Sheinbaum has projected confidence in the two nations' bilateral relationship while defending Mexican sovereignty.

But in the aftermath of the US strike in Venezuela, Trump's threats of military action against Mexico have grown more direct. He said in a *Fox News* interview Thursday night that the United States would "start now hitting land, with regard to the cartels," specifically those in Mexico.

The interview came days after the capture of Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro, and left Sheinbaum and her inner circle agonising over the right tone to strike in the country's response and every message going forward, knowing the White House would be closely watching, according to three senior Mexican officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity given the sensitive nature of the situation.

Mexican officials for months watched with unease as Trump floated the idea of "helping" to dismantle drug cartels — including having boots on the ground or targeted strikes — but many aides thought the threats were mostly bluster, two officials said. They believed that the two countries' deep economic ties and improved security cooperation would shield Mexico from unilateral action.

But that assumption has been shattered, the officials said.

"When we saw what they did in Venezuela, it made us think, 'Oh boy, this is more serious than we thought, and we are on the list of who could be next, and worse, we have been warned,'" said one senior government official, who also requested anonymity because he was not authorised to speak freely.

In the past few days, Sheinbaum has tried to thread a narrow diplomatic needle: rejecting US military intervention in Venezuela — and by extension any suggestion of similar action in Mexico — while avoiding language that could provoke the US president.

But the Trump administration has already shown it was unhappy with some of Sheinbaum's words.

Hours after the strike in Venezuela, the Mexican president posted a passage on the social platform X from the United Nations charter that says countries should refrain from using force against the sovereignty of another nation. The White House responded with a clip of Trump saying in a television interview that Sheinbaum was "a good woman, but the cartels are running Mexico."

The response made Mexican officials quickly realise they had to rethink how to communicate their position and, as one aide put it, proceed with absolute caution.

The morning after the *Fox News* interview, Sheinbaum said she had directed the Mexican foreign minister to speak with his American counterpart, Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Sheinbaum has repeatedly tried to play down the threat of US military intervention in Mexico. But on Tuesday, she admitted that the US designations of fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction and cartel groups as terrorist organisations may give the Trump administration "more elements" to justify it.



Trump threatens, Venezuela and Mexico's dilemma

Now Sheinbaum — who must also appease her leftist political party that holds a large majority in Mexico, and has never outright condemned Maduro — has little room for error in balancing how far Mexico can assert its convictions without paying a price, the officials said.

Part of the Mexican government's concern is the indictment charging Maduro, which mentions Mexico 25 times.

US prosecutors have charged Maduro with narco-terrorism and conspiracy to import cocaine and accused him of partnering with drug traffickers, including the powerful Mexican Sinaloa cartel, to ship cocaine to the United States through Mexico. They also say Maduro facilitated the movement of drug money back to Venezuela from Mexico.

Sheinbaum is acutely sensitive to her country being linked to Maduro, and even bristled publicly at a major Mexican newspaper for featuring those accusations on its front page.

To gauge the level of risk Mexico might face, the country's officials spent much of last week analysing Trump's every word. Sheinbaum's team tracked how often Mexico was mentioned in US media coverage, comparing those references with those of other countries, including Colombia, Greenland and Cuba.

A chart compiled by the president's team and reviewed by *The New York Times* showed that mentions of Mexico rose steadily from the day of the Venezuela attack but then dropped sharply after Monday, as references to Greenland — a territory Trump has vowed to

seize — surged.

The official who shared the chart expressed relief that Mexico was, for now, out of the spotlight.

Despite the unified public front Mexico has sought to project, sharp disagreements have emerged within the Cabinet over how carefully its reaction to the US strike in Venezuela should be calibrated, three officials said.

There is broad agreement that Mexico should oppose the US attack and Maduro's seizure, in keeping with international law and the country's long-standing doctrine of nonintervention. But officials and analysts said that expressing that position without triggering diplomatic repercussions has become a high-wire political act.

Some Cabinet members worry that Sheinbaum's repeated public condemnations of the attacks in Venezuela may backfire, according to one Mexican official and one person close to the administration with direct knowledge of the disagreements. Top aides are particularly concerned about its effect on ongoing tariff negotiations, as well as on the planned review of the United States-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement this summer, the officials said.

Over the past year, Trump has cited illegal immigration and drugs, specifically fentanyl, as justifications for tariffs on Mexico.

Mexican officials fear that the heightened threat of unilateral military action gives Trump even greater leverage in negotiations and, in the event of a US strike, could have disastrous economic consequences for Mexico, the United States' largest trading partner.

"The president is boxed in on all sides," said Jesús Silva-Herzog, a political analyst in Mexico City.

Trump said that he had repeatedly offered Sheinbaum to send the US military into her country to help combat the cartels. But she has consistently rejected that to preserve Mexican sovereignty and in favour of cooperation.

Sheinbaum tried to reassure the public that such threats are Trump's "way of speaking," arguing that the economic ties and security relationship between the two countries were too deep to unravel.

Her government nevertheless moved aggressively to demonstrate its attention to security, further policing the border, arresting thousands of cartel members, seizing large quantities of drugs including fentanyl and raiding drug labs. They also handed over at least 55 high-level traffickers long sought by US authorities.

Mexico expanded intelligence sharing and formal security coordination with Washington, and last month aligned itself further with the United States by imposing tariffs on imports from countries including China. Still, the Trump administration has continued to push Mexico to do more.

Two Mexican officials said the country's main focus now was to emphasise its commitment to the United States by hitting the cartels even harder. The Sheinbaum administration could and should go after — and even turn over to the United States — Mexican officials suspected of ties to organised crime, one official said.

As another official put it, actions speak louder than words. **NYT**

Consumer movement on life support

BHAMY V SHENOY

National Consumer Rights Day is observed every year on December 4 to commemorate the President signing the Consumer Protection Act in 1986. In 2025, however, the day passed with little attention, despite the apt theme: "Efficient and speedy disposal through digital justice."

The e-Jagriti Platform presents a rosy picture of consumer grievance redressal. As of the mid-November, it had facilitated the filing of 1.35 lakh cases and settled 1.31 lakh of them. These figures are impressive and are cited to demonstrate the efficacy of the new digital system. By contrast, under the old system, barely 23% of cases were resolved within the loosely prescribed 90-day timeline. If one applies a more realistic limit—counting from the time a consumer approaches the forum—the number of cases settled within 90 days is negligible.

Speedy redressal, however, is only one aspect of the consumer movement. When the larger picture is considered, India's consumer movement appears to have been on life support for the past few years.

This assertion can be substantiated by examining six critical areas: securing unadulterated and quality food; uninterrupted quality power supply; an efficient justice delivery system; a world-class banking system that meets basic needs through a customer-first approach; curbing medical malpractice to save lives and prevent financial ruin; and treating voters as masters rather than supplicants while delivering government services. These six areas alone are sufficient because of their strategic importance to everyday consumer welfare.

Despite the strong provision of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which allows heavy penalties, a significant proportion of food adulteration cases go unpunished. In recent months, for instance, nearly 60% of such cases in Hyderabad reportedly went scot free. Even after 77 years of Independence and considerable investment and reforms in power sector, round-the-clock electricity remains a pipe dream. Justice delayed, as everyone knows, is justice denied; with nearly 50 million cases pending, it could take an estimated 300 years to clear the backlog.

Indira Gandhi nationalised India's leading banks in 1969 to serve the poor. Are they doing so today? In 2023-2024 alone, 95 scheduled commercial banks received nearly 10 million complaints. Meanwhile, India witnesses an estimated 5.2 million medical malpractice cases annu-

ally, with nearly 80% of medical error-related deaths attributed to surgical mistakes. As for government services, it is virtually impossible to access them without paying a bribe.

These examples amply support the claim that the consumer movement is on life support.

India's formal consumer movement began only after Independence and can be broadly classified into three periods to better understand how it might be revitalised.

The first period predates the Consumer Protection Act of 1986. The Second period, which marked the real dawn of the consumer movement, began with the enactment of the Act. It enabled aggrieved consumers to obtain quicker relief through consumer commissions, without the elaborate procedures of civil courts. Economic liberalisation followed in 1991, driven by foreign exchange crisis, usher in competition and greater choice.

Post-liberalisation, consumers gained options in cars, two wheelers, air travel, and eventually telecommunications, with the advent of mobile phones.

The third period began around 2000. Consumer commissions increasingly came to resemble civil courts, online trade opened new avenues for fraud and cybercrime, and corruption spread across sectors despite the introduction of direct benefit transfer schemes.

Even today, democratic India lacks a genuine consumer movement—one that ensures the consumer is king in the private sector and compels public officials to recognise that they are servants of the citizens, who are the true sovereign masters.

To revitalise consumer movement, only two simple strategies are needed. First citizens must actively participate in the democratic process to elect suitable representatives. Second, they must support—and wherever possible, participate in—the consumer movement. The million-dollar question of course, is how to implement these strategies.

A small, but promising beginning was made this year in Mysuru by involving a few schools in administering a questionnaire with 13 questions related to consumer issues. Each student was required to interview at least 10 people. Such practical, participatory approach—introducing students to the consumer movement through a fun, real-world exercise—may leave a lasting impact and encourage future engagement.

(The writer is founding-working president of Mysuru Grahakara Parishat and trustee of Consumer Voice)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 1976

Nation is above rights: Ahmed

Bombay, January 12
President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed today asked people to desist from discussing questions on freedom of the individual and freedom of the press when bigger problems and issues of national interest were at stake. Inaugurating a women's conference here, Mr. Ahmed said people should not think in terms of "individual rights" but the nation as a whole. "If one individual is affected, we should not bother so long as the country's interests are served well," he said. Mr. Ahmed said that at this critical juncture people should not ask for more rights.

25 YEARS AGO: JANUARY 2001

Musharraf 'not invited' to India for talks

Bali (Indonesia), Jan 12.
India today categorically said that "no invitation has been issued to Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf to come to Delhi" amidst media reports that the Pakistan leader was ready to visit New Delhi for a dialogue to seek a solution to the Kashmir Problem. "I have seen the report, but no date has been fixed as yet," Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee told journalists at the Jakarata airport while he was leaving for Bali for holidaying after a hectic tour of Vietnam and Indonesia.

OASIS | SHASHIKALA M S

The false centre of action

being the highest sorrow.

Though *ahankar* is not material, its consequences are unmistakably real. It drives behaviour, ambition and excess. Unlike material processes, which unfold in time, the correction of this error does not require duration. The illusion of the doer can collapse instantly the moment it is clearly seen. Seen clearly, this insight is not philosophical abstraction but a lived possibility, available in ordinary moments of attention, restraint and honest self-observation. Life offers infinite chances for such seeing. Every



illusion dropped is a rebirth; every illusion acquired is a subtle death.

This false sense of doing is not limited to individual suffering; it has planetary consequences. The climate crisis humanity faces today is the direct result of our *karma* — our collective doing. The modern response seeks more action, more solutions, more growth. But the deeper answer, Acharya Prashant suggests, is withdrawal. Not doing. Stopping the relentless idea of growth as we know it—economic, extractive, consumerist.

Consumption in itself is not the

problem. Nature consumes. Animals consume. Plants consume. *Prakriti* gives abundantly and lovingly, and life takes only what it needs to survive. Human beings alone consume for their *ahankar* — to assert identity, dominance and accumulation beyond need.

The ego survives by constant engagement. Doing becomes its proof of existence. Withdrawal and non-engagement, therefore, are not passivity but clarity. What is often described as *vivrah vedana* — the pain of separation — is in truth *pashchattapa*, remorse for having moved away from wholeness. Where truth stands, the imagined "I" — the doer and sufferer — cannot.

SC seeks EC reply on TMC MPs' allegations on SIR irregularities

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court on Monday sought a response from the Election Commission (EC) on fresh pleas by Trinamool Congress (TMC) MPs alleging arbitrariness and procedural irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joyimalya Bagchi took note of the applications filed by lawmakers Derek O'Brien and Dola Sen in their pending pleas challenging the procedural actions taken during the SIR.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for O'Brien, said the EC's instructions on the SIR were being issued through social media platforms like WhatsApp, and this was leading to booth-level officers (BLOs) acting without any formal orders or lawful authorisation.

The applicants were aggrieved with the poll body issuing critical instructions to field officers through WhatsApp or orally, and not through proper written notifications, circular or order.

The plea urged the apex court to direct the EC to extend the current January 15 deadline for submitting claims and objections, and also to forthwith stop issuing instructions for compliance by BLOs and other officers through WhatsApp or other such informal channels, besides declaring all such instructions issued so far as illegal.

It claimed 58,20,898 names were deleted from the electoral rolls in West Bengal without any notice or personal hearing.

Ex-VP Dhankhar hospitalised after 2 bouts of unconsciousness

NEW DELHI, PTI: Former vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar was admitted to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here on Monday after he fell unconscious twice on January 10, officials said.

On January 10, Dhankhar (74) had "two bouts of unconsciousness" when he went to the washroom, the officials said.

"Today, he had gone to AIIMS for a checkup when the doctors insisted that he should get admitted for tests," an official said.

Dhankhar had blacked out on multiple occasions in the past, including in the Rann of Kutch, Uttarakhand, Kerala, and the national capital while attending public events as the vice president, he said.

Dhankhar had quit as the vice president last year, citing health grounds.

Modi, Merz boost India-Germany partnership

Trade crosses \$50 billion; visa-free transit notified

SATISH JHA
AHMEDABAD, DHNS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's visit came at a "significant time" as the two countries had recently marked 25 years of their strategic partnership and 75 years of diplomatic relations.

He said the visit "brought new energy" to the growing economic and strategic ties between India and Germany.

"Our bilateral trade has reached an all-time high, exceeding the \$50-billion mark. Over 2,000 German companies have been operating in India for years, reflecting their unwavering confidence in the country and the opportunities it provides," the prime minister said, briefing the media after the bilateral talks.

The talks were held at Mahatma Mandir in the state capital, Gandhinagar, hours after

STRENGTHENING RELATIONS

■ India, Germany sign defence, security, trade and economy pacts

■ Germany announces new funding commitments of EUR 1.24 bn to India under the bilateral Green and Sustainable Development Partnership

■ Germany to open Honorary Consul office in Ahmedabad

German Chancellor Merz arrived here.

During his stay, Merz visited the Mahatma Gandhi-founded Sabarmati Ashram and flew kites with PM Modi at Sabarmati Riverfront, where the international kite festival also kicked off.

India and Germany signed a series of bilateral agreements, covering a wide range of areas,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz during the India-Germany CEOs Forum in Gujarat's Gandhinagar on Monday. PTI

including economic and strategic cooperation, as well as legal migration. This also included visa-free transit for Indian passport holders.

Among the areas of agreement between the two countries were defence and security, trade and economy, critical and emerging technologies, traditional medicines, renewable energy, science and research, education, skilling and mobility, and sports, among others.

The list of announcements included visa-free transit for Indian passport holders for transiting through Germany; the establishment of a bilateral dialogue mechanism on the Indo-Pacific; new funding com-

mitments of EUR 1.24 billion under flagship bilateral Green and Sustainable Development Partnership; supporting priority projects in renewable energies, green hydrogen, PM e-Bus Sewa, and climate-resilient urban infrastructure; and the opening of the honorary consul of Germany in Ahmedabad, among others.

Modi hailed Merz's first official visit to an Asian country, saying that it was a "strong testament to the importance he places on relations with India". The PM said that both countries "shared deep and historic people-to-people ties".

The German chancellor will fly to Bengaluru on Tuesday.

Germany for closer India ties to cut Delhi's reliance on Russia

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Germany wanted a closer security partnership with New Delhi, including deeper "cooperation between our defence industries" to cut India's traditional dependence on Russia for military hardware.

With defence and security issues being a key item on the agenda of the summit meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Merz in Ahmedabad, the two countries signed a declaration of intent on strengthening bilateral defence industrial cooperation.

"We will work on a roadmap to enhance cooperation between our defence industries, which will open up more opportunities for co-development and co-production," said Modi.

Merz began his India visit two weeks ahead of an EU-India summit, and as India and the European bloc are working on a free trade agreement.

India's negotiations with

Germany to buy six conventional submarines for the Indian Navy are "proceeding positively", but the deal has not yet been concluded, a top official said on Monday, even as Berlin sought "deeper cooperation" between the defence industries of the two nations.

Asked about the long-awaited submarine deal in a post-summit media briefing, foreign secretary Vikram Misri said, "There are technical, financial and commercial discussions in such deals. These discussions have maintained a positive momentum. The deal has not been concluded, but discussions are proceeding positively, and we hope to see a positive outcome."

New Delhi has been negotiating with Berlin to procure six diesel-electric submarines with air-independent propulsion technology from German major ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems. The underwater boats will be manufactured by Mazagaon Dock Ltd in Mumbai.

The two leaders took note of the continuing cooperation

in submarines, obstacle avoidance system for helicopters, and Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems, said the joint statement issued after the summit meeting.

Misri said Germany modified its defence policies to favour India, as earlier it was difficult for arms manufacturers to obtain export licences, and the process was time-consuming.

But the situation has changed, and clearances are coming fast. "Almost the entire backlog has been cleared," he said.

The foreign secretary asserted that India's sourcing of military hardware from multiple countries was "entirely driven by national interest".

"There are a lot of factors involved and it is certainly not ideological. It is entirely driven by our interest. I would not say that sourcing from one is linked to sourcing from another," Misri said responding to a query on German Chancellor's comments on Russian supply of defence equipment.

Back-to-back PSLV rocket setbacks for Isro

Mission suffers second failure in past one year

CHENNAI, DHNS

The year 2026 started on a sad note for the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) as the PSLV-C62 mission, which launched the Earth observation satellite EOS-N1 and 14 co-passenger satellites, failed due to an anomaly during the PS3 stage on Monday.

This is the second time that a PSLV mission has failed in the past one year, after the PSLV-C61 also could not be fulfilled. After the failure of PSLV-C61 in May 2025, Isro is said to have taken enough precautions to ensure that the next mission that uses the rocket is successful, but Monday's failure is a major setback.

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle is known as the workhorse launch vehicle of Isro, completing 63 flights, including notable missions like Chandrayaan-1, Mars Orbiter Mission, Aditya-L1 and Astrosat Mission. In 2017, PSLV set a world record by launching 104 satellites in a single mission.

The PSLV took off majestically at 10:17 am from the first launchpad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), and the first two stages performed nominally. However, an anomaly occurred when the rocket was at Stage 3—around 203 seconds after the lift-off—causing the rocket to not be able to reach its intended orbit. After this, Isro aborted the mission.

Isro chairman Dr V Narayanan said PSLV is a four-



stage vehicle with two solid stages and two liquid stages, and the performance of the vehicle up to the end of the third stage was expected.

"Close to the end of the third stage, we are seeing more disturbance in the vehicle, and subsequently, there was a deviation observed in the flight path. We are analysing the data, and we shall come back at the earliest," he added.

The PSLV-C62 mission was intended to deploy the 1,696 kg EOS-N1 Earth observation satellite and 14 co-passenger satellites into sun-synchronous orbit and a KID Capsule into a re-entry trajectory.

PSLV-C62 was the ninth dedicated commercial mission undertaken by NewSpace India Limited (NSIL). The mission is also a boost to the burgeoning private space

sector in the country, with Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space alone contributing five satellites. Indian companies Laxman Gyanpith and OrbitAid have one satellite each.

Of the remaining eight, five were from Brazil's AltoSpace, and one each from the UK's SSTL, Antharkshya Pratishthan of Nepal and the MEA, India; Orbital Paradigm (Spain), and RIDE (France).

SC to examine plea challenging legal immunity to CEC, ECs

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a plea challenging the immunity granted to the chief election commissioner and election commissioners under the CEC Act, 2023.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joyimalya Bagchi issued notice to the Centre and the Election Commission in the matter, though it refused to stay the provision.

The top court was hearing a PIL, filed by Lok Prahari, an NGO, challenging Section 16 of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.

According to the provision, "notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, no court shall entertain or continue any civil or criminal proceedings against any person who is or was a chief election commissioner or an election commissioner for any act, thing or word, committed, done or spoken by him, or in the course of acting or purporting to act in the discharge of his official duty or function".

The plea claimed the provision "gives unprecedented, unbridled power to the CEC and ECs by providing them complete blanket permanent immunity for life from any civil and even criminal proceedings for their wrongdoings in gross misuse of their office".

E-cigarette in LS: Speaker vows 'exemplary punishment'

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla

A forensic investigation into the e-cigarette complaint in the Lok Sabha is currently underway, and if the accused MP is found guilty, "exemplary punishment" will be given, Speaker Om Birla said on Monday. He added that action would be taken as per parliamentary norms.

In the last session, BJP lawmaker Anurag Thakur complained that a TMC lawmaker was smoking an e-cigarette in the House while proceedings were ongoing, with Birla in the chair. The possession and use of e-cigarettes are illegal in India.

Birla said no member would be allowed to lower the dignity and sanctity of the House. "The matter is now before the privilege committee, and we will act as per its recommendation. Everyone must maintain decorum in the House. A member could even lose his membership," he said.

Parliament officials said

that investigations are underway and some evidence has been sent to the forensic department.

On December 11, during the proceedings of the House, Thakur rose to speak. "E-cigarettes are banned across the country, and yet they are being used in the House? Trinamool MPs have been sitting and smoking them for several days. Please investigate this immediately," Thakur complained during Question Hour.

In response, Birla said, "Everyone must adhere to parliamentary traditions and rules. If such matters come to my attention, I will act."

The use and possession of electronic cigarettes are prohibited under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019.

India to host Commonwealth Speakers Conference from Jan 14

NEW DELHI, DHNS: India will host the 28th Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference after 16 years, with presiding officers of 42 countries already confirming their presence, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Monday.

The conference will be held from January 14 to 16 and PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate the conference.

Birla said that in all, 62 presiding officers and speakers are scheduled to attend, and will mark the highest attendance in the conference.

"When the speakers meet, innovations take place, new developments emerge, and the focus is not just on voting, but also on ensuring that the public remains connected to Parliament even after the voting process. For us, the key focus will be how India represents its 1.4 billion people," Birla said.

The chairperson of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Dr Tulia Ackson and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) chairperson, Dr Christopher Kalila, will also be present.

'Insult to South Indians': BJP slams Raj Thackeray's lungi remark

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

The BJP slammed the Shiv Sena (UBT)-MNS alliance and the Thackeray brothers — Uddhav and Raj — over the controversial 'uthao lungi, bajao pungli' remark, calling it an insult to South Indians.

MNS founder-president Raj Thackeray invoked the slogan at the Shivaji Park rally alongside close aide and the party's Mumbai unit chief Sandeep Deshpande.

The phrase — long criticised as divisive — traces back to Balasaheb Thackeray, who, after founding the Shiv Sena on 19 June 1966, used it against South Indian migrants.

The Shiv Sena was back then voicing resentment against South Indians, who held a major share of clerical, banking, and other white-collar jobs in Mumbai's private sector — which the party claimed was denying opportunities to the local Marathi-speaking people.



Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and MNS chief Raj Thackeray during a joint rally ahead of the BMC election in Mumbai. PTI

Raj and Deshpande's remarks came against the backdrop of Tamil Nadu BJP vice-president and ex-IPS officer K Annamalai's statement that "Bombay is not a Maharashtra city but an international city," which irked the Thackerays.

At the rally, Raj Thackeray said, "One rasmalai came from Tamil Nadu... What is your connection to come here? That is why Balasaheb had said — ha-

tao lungi, bajao pungli (remove the lungi, blow the pipe)."

Senior BJP leader Niranjan Shetty hit back at Raj and Deshpande, saying: "With the slogan, they are targeting South Indian people."

He told *DH* on Monday: "The situation in the mid-1960s and now is totally different. It's been nearly 60 years, and the new generation is not going to fall into the trap of the Thackeray brothers. The lungi is fundamentally the attire of India's working-class people. By invoking this slogan, Deshpande and the Thackeray brothers have insulted the working class."

Shetty continued: "The lungi was introduced to India through cultural exchange with South-East Asia. Because it is easy to wear and comfortable, it became popular among the working class, especially in hot and humid regions. In coastal states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, the lungi is the attire of the working class."

Thackerays can't dictate to me; I will go to Mumbai again: Annamalai

CHENNAI, DHNS: Former Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai stated he won't be intimidated by threats from MNS and Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders while defending his claim that Mumbai is "not merely a city of Maharashtra but an international city."

Speaking to reporters here, Annamalai said, "... Shiv Sena runs a newspaper called *Saamana* in which they wrote that if I entered Mumbai, they would cut off my leg. I will come to Mumbai again. Do whatever you can. If I were to get scared of such threats and intimidation, I would have remained in my native village forever."

While campaigning for BJP candidates in the BMC polls last week, Annamalai had said Bombay was not merely a city of Maharashtra; but an international city, triggering sharp reactions from MNS and Sena (UBT).

Fares out: No RAC and waiting list for Vande Bharat sleepers

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Indian Railways has announced the fare structure and travel rules for its upcoming Vande Bharat Sleeper Express trains.

The price of the Vande Bharat sleeper train tickets will be slightly higher than existing premium trains, and require passengers to shell out a minimum fare equivalent to what is charged for a 400-km distance.

The first train is scheduled to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the Guwahati-Howrah route next week. Passengers will be charged Rs 2.4 per km for 3AC, Rs 3.1 per km for 2AC, and Rs 3.8 per km for 1st AC.

So, the minimum fare of a Vande Bharat sleeper train, which covers up to 400 km, will be Rs 960 for 3AC, Rs 1,240 for 2AC, and Rs 1,520 for 1AC.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be levied separately, said the Railway Ministry in a statement.

Similarly, for 1,000-km distances — like between Howrah and Guwahati — the fare will be Rs 2,400 for 3AC, Rs 3,100 for 2AC, and Rs 3,800 for 1AC.

Fares go up noticeably on longer routes: Up to 1,600 km will cost Rs 3,840 in 3AC, Rs 4,960 in 2AC, and Rs 6,080 in 1AC. They reach Rs 4,800 in 3AC, Rs 6,200 in 2AC, and Rs 7,600 in 1AC for up to 2,000 km.

On routes about 2,800 km, passengers will pay Rs 6,720, Rs 8,680, and Rs 10,640, respectively.

Fares would be Rs 8,400 for 3AC, Rs 10,850 for 2AC, and Rs 13,300 for 1AC on the longest routes, of about 3,500 km. Interestingly, these trains will not permit RAC or waitlisted tickets. Only confirmed passengers will be allowed to travel, and all berths will be available from the day bookings open.

However, the existing rules for reservation are unchanged. Quotas will be provided for women, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and duty-pass holders. No additional quotas would be made for these trains.

Tickets will be available only on digital platforms, and the system will ensure that lower berths go to senior citizens and eligible women passengers, wherever possible.

The trains' timetable will be planned in a way that they depart in evening and reach their destination early next morning, said Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

Kerala CM Pinarayi slams Centre for 'fund discrimination'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah said his party was aiming at the comprehensive development of Kerala after coming to power in the state, the Left Front government (LDF) here organised a day-long fast in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday, accusing the Centre of trying to sabotage the state's development by denying its financial dues.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan alleged that the Centre was showing financial discrimination towards Kerala and trying to economically strangle the state by flouting its constitutional rights.

The state was entitled to receive Rs 12,000 crore during this January-March period, but the Central government denied Rs 5,900 crore, the chief minister added.

CBI grills Vijay for over 7 hrs; actor denies TVK’s role in Karur stampede

May be summoned again for questioning after seeking exemption over Pongal

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

The CBI on Monday questioned Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) president and actor Vijay for seven hours at the agency’s headquarters in New Delhi in connection with the stampede at a rally in Karur on September 27 that killed 41 people. The day also saw the CBI inquiring the then Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Davidson Devaasirvatham, now DGP (Armed Police), and then Inspector General (Central zone) K Joshi Nirmal Kumar on the stampede. Vijay, clad in a black shirt and a black trouser which his fans interpreted as a “strong political message to the BJP, took a chartered flight from



Vijay

Chennai on Monday morning. Sourcesaid that Vijay may becalledagain for questioning at a later stage after the actor sought an exemption from appearing on Tuesday due to Pongal festivities. The questioning came at a time when the BJP is facing questions whether it was trying to stop the release of Vijay’s cinema swansong, ‘Jana Nayagan’,throughtheCentral Board of Film Certification. BJP leaders have been inviting Vijay to join the NDA to ensure that the anti-government votes don’t get split, eventually helping the DMK. Sources told DH that CBI sleuths wanted to know why

Vijay arrived late at the venue, why did he continue with his speech, why did the rally begin late, and why didn’t he stay back when he knew something was amiss – the actor did throw water bottles at the crowd when someone sought help after people began fainting due to dehydration. Other questions include whether the TVK expected the crowd to swell and the arrangements made by the party for the public meeting. The questioning of Vijay came after the agency probed TVK leaders – ‘Bussy’ N Anand, C T R Nirmal Kumar, Aadhav Arjuna, and Mathiazhagan – for three days in December. It is believed that Vijay maintained that neither his party nor him were responsible for the stampede and laid the blame on the district administration. It is understood that Vijay also told the CBI sleuths that he left Karur for Chennai as he feared that his presence would escalate the situation. (With inputs from Shemin Joy in New Delhi)

Displaced Meiteis protest rehabilitation delay in Imphal

SUMIR KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI, DHNS

The growing anger among the Meiteis displaced by the conflict in Manipur spilled onto the streets once again on Monday, with a large number of them staging a protest march in Imphal. Members of Co-ordination Committee on Manipur Unity (COCOMI), an apex body of civil society, particularly in the Valley and the displaced persons living in relief camps in the Valley, demanded steps to facilitate the resettlement of the displaced persons in their original homes in Kuki-dominated districts. “The administration earlier promised that steps are being

taken for the resettlement of the displaced persons by December. But the promise has still remained unfulfilled. People have been suffering immensely in the relief camps, with some committing suicides and many dying due to lack of proper medical facilities,” said Meirambam Ratan Singh, a displaced person from Churachandpur. Singh, a small entrepreneur, had to flee to Imphal on May 4, 2023, soon after the conflict erupted. Men and women, with placards in their hands, shouted slogans condemning the alleged indifference to their demands. They tried to march towards Lok Bhawan but were stopped by the security forces at Keishampat.

2 Bengal nurses show Nipah virus symptoms; Centre steps in

NEW DELHI, PTI

Two suspected cases of Nipah virus have been detected at the Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory at AIIMS Kalyani, West Bengal, official sources said. According to a senior official of the West Bengal health department, two nurses working at a private hospital in North 24 Parganas district were showing symptoms of Nipah virus. The condition of the two nurses, one male and one female, is stated to be “very critical”, he said. “Both nurses work in the same hospital in Barasat. They are suspected of being infected with Nipah virus. Samples of both nurses were sent to

Kalyani AIIMS for testing, and preliminary reports indicate a possible Nipah infection,” the official said. While one nurse is a resident of Nadia district, the other lives at Katwa in Purba Bardhaman district, he said. “Both are currently admitted to the Barasat hospital where they work, and have been placed in the isolation ward with ventilator support,” the official added. Given the serious nature of the Nipah virus infection, a zoonotic disease with high mortality and potential for rapid spread, the situation is being handled with utmost priority, the sources said. Upon receiving the informa-

tion, the Union health secretary held discussions with the chief secretary and principal secretary (health), government of West Bengal, to review the situation and ensure swift and coordinated action. A national joint outbreak response team has been deployed to support the state government in containment, the sources said. The Centre has shared guidelines on the Nipah virus under the communicable disease alert with the state Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme unit. Union Health Minister J P Nadda has written to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, assuring full support.

‘Shocking, disgusting’: SC on judicial officer urinating before woman on train

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Supreme Court stayed the Madhya Pradesh High Court’s order that quashed the termination of a judicial officer who allegedly created a nuisance and urinated in front of the berth of a woman co-passenger on a train in 2018. Calling the judicial officer’s conduct “disgusting” and “shocking”, a bench of Justices

Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta orally observed that he should have been dismissed as his behaviour amounted to the “grossest grave misconduct”. Expressing indignation, the bench noted, “He urinated in the compartment... There was a lady present.” The bench, however, issued notices to both the judicial officer and the MP government,

seeking their responses to a petition by the state HC’s administrative side that challenged a division bench order issued in May last year. The division bench had quashed the September 2019 termination order of the judicial officer and directed that he be reinstated within 15 days. It was contended that his conduct at the time of the in-

cident was unbecoming of a judicial officer. The plea further stressed that by substituting its own penalty on the ground of proportionality, the division bench went beyond the scope of judicial review. It also contended that the HC, by applying the higher criminal standard, not only disregarded the very rationale un-

derlying service jurisprudence but also nullified the reasoned findings of the inquiry officer, the administrative committee, and the full court. It was also contended that while the standard of proof for criminal proceedings was “beyond a reasonable doubt”, that for departmental proceedings was “preponderance of probabilities”.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie



Beetle Bailey



Marvin



Hagar The Horrible



Peanuts



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FCSFO
OEVHR
OWAULT
URMUMR

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Ans. here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: SHIRT GRANT SPIFFY FUSION
Answer: The bread company hoped its new bread dough would result in -- RISING PROFITS



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

“ ”
(Answers tomorrow)

◆ SU-DO-KU-6802 ◆

4	2			1	7
7		6			
5	9	1		2	
3			5	7	
1		8		6	2
	4		9		5
	7		4	3	1
			8		7
3	6			5	2

hard

3	9	4	5	8	1	6	2	7
8	5	6	7	4	2	3	1	9
7	2	1	6	3	9	5	4	8
6	4	8	9	1	5	2	7	3
9	3	5	8	2	7	1	6	4
2	1	7	4	6	3	9	8	5
5	6	9	1	7	4	8	3	2
4	8	2	3	5	6	7	9	1
1	7	3	2	9	8	4	5	6

SOLUTION TO 6801

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

HITORI-3256

7	8	6	2	1	4	3	8
8	8	2	8	3	8	5	7
5	6	3	8	2	1	7	4
8	4	7	4	5	8	6	3
6	2	3	4	3	5	7	8
2	8	8	3	7	8	4	6
1	5	4	6	8	7	5	4
5	7	5	3	8	6	8	3

SOLUTION TO 3255

7		6	1	5	4	8
4	2	6		5		8
5		1		4	7	2
8	3	1	2	6		5
2		5		3	6	1
	8		5	4	2	1
3	1	2	7	8		6
1		7		2	8	3

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3256

10	42	6		18	4		19	6
8			14	3				
			7				12	
35							7	
5			13			19		
			7					
6				28	14	3		38
4			11				4	
33			23				11	
14			12			9		14
14								
9							17	

SOLUTION TO 3255

15	7	1	9	16	3	1	13	9	4
34	8	3	2	9	4	5	6	1	
16	10	7	6	2	1	9	5	7	
24	7	2	4	2	7	2	5	7	
14	9	8	7	1	7	9	7	8	9
16	2	6	7	1	5	4	7		
14	9	8	8	4	1	3	6	8	2
16	7	5	6	3	6	1	3	9	7
14	1	6	4	7	8	9	12	11	
16	5	9	8	9		6	4	2	

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3795

7						2	5
				3	5		
		4					9
8							
3						7	4
4	5	6		2			8
			1				7
			2	5			1
			9				8

SOLUTION TO 3794

5	4	9	1	6	8	2	3	7
3	2	8	7	4	5	6	9	1
7	1	6	2	3	9	5	4	8
6	8	1	3	5	2	4	7	9
2	9	7	4	8	1	3	6	5
4	5	3	6	9	7	1	8	2
8	7	4	5	1	6	9	2	3
9	3	5	8	2	4	7	1	6
1	6	2	9	7	3	8	5	4

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12330

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
			9				
10					11		
				12			
13	14				15		16
17					18		
				19			
20	21				22		23
24				25			
			26				
27					28		
			29				
30						31	

- ACROSS
1 Stay clear of (5)
6 Oily fruit (5)
9 Nourish (7)
10 Frighten (5)
11 Dawdle (5)
12 Senior member (5)
13 Expands (7)
15 Acquire (3)
17 Among (4)
18 Detective (6)
19 Remembrance flower (5)
20 Evoke (6)
22 Close noisily (4)
24 Be seated (3)
25 Flower-shaped badge (7)
26 Lid (5)
27 Swagger (5)
28 Lukewarm (5)
29 Inflatable rubber bag (7)
30 Insurgent (5)
- 31 Keen (5)
DOWN
2 Casualty (6)
3 Raid, incursion (6)
4 Owing (3)
5 Distinctive character (5)
6 Shipshape (7)
7 Lacking fat (4)
8 A fabric (6)
12 Warehouse (5)
13 Challenges (5)
14 Restrict (5)
15 Culpability (5)
16 Aromatic herb (5)
18 Animal's trail (5)
19 Of crucial importance (7)
21 Small (6)
22 Girl's name (6)
23 Clothes, garments (6)
25 Spools (5)
26 Solid block (4)
28 Foot part (3)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12329

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 3, Ga-N-gs 8, Local 10, Litre 11, Tom 12, Polar 13, Pageboy 15, Deb-I-t 18, Run 19, Se-Nat-e 21, Paste-L-s 22, Otis 23, Dent 24, Round-Ed 26, Beckon 29, Tot 31, Treat 32, Re-tract 34, Yawed 35, O-ft 36, SOGAT 37, Piton 38, Keith.
DOWN: 1, Wotan 2, Cam-eras 4, Ah-oy 5, Glad-ES 6, Siren 7, Fruit 9, Cog 12, Pontoon 14, B-U-S 16, Bare-d 17, (eye)Teeth 19, Slanted 20, Doubt 21, Pie-ce 23, Detrol-t 24, Rotate 25, Do-T 27, E-RR-or 28, Kayak (rev.) 30, Actor 32, Rest 33, Aft.

EASY

ACROSS: 3, Ideas 8, Decay 10, Boxer 11, Rob 12, Peril 13, Hallibut 15, Darts 18, Nut 19, Cerise 21, Tetanus 22, Poet 23, Seal 24, Ravages 26, Osprey 29, Tan 31, Notes 32, Hopeful 34, Lunar 35, Gas 36, Denim 37, Pants 38, Cease.
DOWN: 1, Feral 2, Cabinet 4, Duet 5, Abides 6, Solar 7, Melts 9, Col 12, Put away 14, But 16, Rises 17, Sells 19, Curator 20, Apron 21, Tempt 23, Senegal 24, Resume 25, Gap 27, Sober 28, Relic 30, Ousts 32, Hats 33, Fan.

SCRABBLE

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T O S R P E C

S Z I O M T E

D L I L M E A

L I I E E D B

RACK 1

RACK 2

RACK 3

RACK 4

PAR SCORE 120-130
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

RACK 1 = 77

RACK 2 = 14

RACK 3 = 16

RACK 4 = 11

PAR SCORE 75-85

JUDD'S TOTAL

Iran wants to negotiate, says Trump

We're prepared for war and ready for talks: Tehran

DUBAI, AP/PTI

US President Donald Trump said Iran has proposed negotiations after his threat to strike the Islamic Republic, as an ongoing crackdown on demonstrators has led to hundreds of deaths.

Trump said late on Sunday that his administration was in talks to set up a meeting with Tehran, but cautioned that he may have to act first as reports mount of increasing deaths and the government continues to arrest protesters.

"The meeting is being set up, but we may have to act because of what's happening before the meeting. But a meeting is being set up. Iran called, they want to negotiate," Trump told reporters on Air Force One on Sunday night. Iran did not acknowledge Trump's comments immediately. It has previously warned the US military, and Israel would be "legitimate targets" if America uses force to protect demonstrators.

Iran's foreign minister said on Monday that his country was prepared for war but also ready to negotiate after Trump warned that the US might intervene to stop the government's increasingly deadly crackdown on opposition protests.

"We are not looking for war, but we are prepared for war—even more prepared than the previous war," Abbas Araghchi, the foreign minister, told a

conference of foreign ambassadors in the capital, Tehran, broadcast by state television. He appeared to be referring to the 12-day war with Israel last June, which the US joined to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities.

"We are also ready for negotiations, but negotiations that are fair, with equal rights and mutual respect," he added.

Iran also said Monday that communication channels were open between Araghchi and Steve Witkoff, Trump's Middle East envoy.

"Iran has never left the negotiating table, but it will not engage in one-sided negotiations," Esmail Baghaei, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, said at a news conference Monday.

The signal from Iranian authorities that they were open to diplomacy with the United States came after Trump threatened Sunday that he might act militarily to curb the government's repression of widespread demonstrations.

Meanwhile, US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, which has accurately reported on past unrest in Iran, gave the death toll as 544. With the internet down in Iran and phone lines cut off, gauging the demonstrations from abroad has grown more difficult. Iran's government has not offered overall casualty figures. A witness told the AP that the streets of Tehran are empty at the sunset call to prayers each night.



An anti-Iranian regime protester shouts slogans outside the Iranian Embassy in London on Monday. AFP

Pak, Indonesia closing in on defence deal

ISLAMABAD/JAKARTA, REUTERS: Indonesia's defence minister met Pakistan's air force chief in Islamabad to discuss a potential deal that includes the sale of combat jets and killer drones to Jakarta, three security officials with knowledge of the meeting on Monday said.

The talks come as Pakistan's defence industry moves forward with a series of defence procurement negotiations, including deals with Libya's National Army and Sudan's army, and looks to establish itself as a sizable regional player.

One source said the talks revolved around the sale of JF-17 jets, a multi-role combat aircraft jointly developed by Pakistan and China, and drones designed for surveillance and striking targets.

Trump describes himself as 'Acting Prez of Venezuela'

NEW YORK, PTI: US President Donald Trump has posted a photo of himself on his social media site Truth Social with his designation listed as "Acting President of Venezuela."

The post on Truth Social on Sunday has Trump's official portrait and then the designation "Acting President of Venezuela," "Incumbent January 2026." It also has his designation as the 45th and 47th President of the US, who assumed office on January 20, 2025.

Earlier this month, the US carried out a "large-scale" strike against Venezuela, capturing the country's leader, Nicolas Maduro, who, along with his wife Cilia Flores, was flown to New York, where they were indicted on narco-terrorism conspiracy charges.

Trump has said that the US will "run Venezuela" until

such time as we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition. We can't take a chance that someone else takes over Venezuela who doesn't have the interests of Venezuelans in mind."

Venezuela's vice president and oil minister, Delcy Rodriguez, was formally sworn in as the country's interim president last week. Trump had said that the interim authorities in Venezuela will be turning over between 30 and 50 million barrels of "high-quality, sanctioned oil" to the US, which will be sold at its market price.

"That money will be controlled by me, as President of the United States of America, to ensure it is used to benefit the people of Venezuela and the United States! I have asked Energy Secretary Chris Wright to execute this plan immediately."

The Golden Globes 2026 WINNERS

Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another" led the Golden Globes, while Chloe Zhao's "Hamnet" pulled off a surprise best film, drama win.

BEST FILMS

- Best Film (Comedy/Musical): One Battle After Another
- Best Film (Drama): Hamnet

●Best Animated Film: KPop Demon Hunters

●Best International Film: The Secret Agent (Brazil)

●Best Box Office & Cinematic Achievement: Sinners

TELEVISION AWARDS

- Best Drama Series: The Pitt
- Best Comedy Series: The Studio
- Best Limited Series: Adolescence

Noah Wyle, Best Performance by a Male Actor in "The Pitt"

Best Actress (Drama): Jessie Buckley (Hamnet)

FILM ACTING WINNERS

- Best Actor (Comedy/Musical): Seth Rogen (The Studio)
- Best Actress (Comedy/Musical): Rose Byrne (If I Had Legs I'd Kick You)
- Best Supporting Actor: Stellan Skarsgård (Sentimental Value)
- Best Supporting Actress: Teyana Taylor (One Battle After Another)

Trump admin has revoked over 1 lakh visas: State dept

Crackdown includes student visas

WASHINGTON, REUTERS

The US State Department said on Monday it has revoked more than 1,00,000 visas since President Donald Trump took office last year, setting what it described as a new record as his administration pursues a hardline immigration policy.

The scale of the revocations reflects the broad immigration crackdown launched when

Trump returned to the White House last year, which has seen an unprecedented number of migrants deported. The administration has also tightened visa approvals, introducing stricter social media vetting and expanded screening procedures.

"The State Department has now revoked over 1,00,000 visas, including around 8,000 student visas and 2,500 specialised visas for individuals who had encounters with US law enforcement for criminal activity. We will continue to deport these thugs to keep America safe," the department said.

The four leading reasons for visa revocations were overstays, driving under the influence, as-

sault and theft, State Department deputy spokesperson Tommy Pigott said. He added that the figure represented a 150% increase compared with 2024. The State Department has also launched a Continuous Vetting Center aimed at ensuring "all foreign nationals on American soil comply with our laws — and that the visas of those who pose a threat to American citizens are swiftly revoked," Pigott said.

In November, the department said it had revoked around 80,000 non-immigrant visas since Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2025, for offences ranging from driving under the influence to assault and theft.

US prosecutors begin probe against Fed chief

WASHINGTON (US), AFP

US prosecutors have opened an inquiry that could lead to a "criminal indictment" against the Federal Reserve, its chairman Jerome Powell said, denouncing what he described as new "threats and ongoing pressure" from the administration of President Donald Trump.

In a rare video statement on Sunday, Powell said the US central bank received grand jury subpoenas on Friday related to his Senate testimony in June, which partly concerned a major renovation project of Federal Reserve office buildings.

He dismissed the subpoenas as "pretexts" following months of bitter conflict with Trump, who has publicly criticised the Fed for not cutting interest rates more aggressively to boost economic growth. "The



US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell. REUTERS FILE

threat of criminal charges is a consequence of the Federal Reserve setting interest rates based on our best assessment of what will serve the public, rather than following the preferences of the president," Powell said.

"This is about whether the Fed will be able to continue to set interest rates based on evidence and economic conditions, or whether monetary policy will instead be directed by political pressure or intimidation," he added. The Fed, which makes independent monetary policy decisions,

Top British royal astronomy honour for Indian-origin professor

LONDON, PTI: US-based astronomer Professor Shrinivas Kulkarni has been awarded the prestigious Gold Medal by the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) in London for his "field-defining" discoveries in time-domain astronomy.

Maharashtra-born Kulkarni is the George Ellery Hale Professor of Astronomy and Planetary Science at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech). His father, Dr R H Kulkarni, was a surgeon based in Hubballi, while his mother, Vimala Kulkarni, was a home-maker. He is one of four children and has three sisters — Sunanda Kulkarni, Sudha Murthy, an educator, author and philanthropist who is married to one of the co-founders of Infosys, and Jaishree Deshpande, wife of Gururaj Deshpande.

At Caltech, Kulkarni has discovered a wide range of astronomical objects, including brown dwarfs and remote bursts of gamma rays. His RAS Gold Medal citation from last week recognises his "sustained, innovative and ground-breaking contributions to multi-wavelength transient astrophysics".

In receiving the highest honour from the historic organisation, awarded annually since 1824, he joins great scientific minds such as Stephen Hawking, Jocelyn Bell Burnell, Albert Einstein and Edwin Hubble.

"I was very surprised to hear the news, especially given the stellar list of past winners," Kulkarni said.

"I would like to thank my long-term collaborators, the engineering crew and members of the Palomar Transient Factory and the Zwicky Transient Facility for their immense contribution to the projects," he added.

The scientist described the discovery of the first millisecond pulsar as "the most fun achievement in my life", saying: "I was a graduate student when I made the discovery. I could not sleep for several days."

Kulkarni, who also won the 2024 Shaw Prize in Astronomy, joined Caltech in 1985 and has since made several landmark findings, including demonstrating in 1997 that powerful gamma-ray bursts originate outside the Milky Way.

WORLD AT A GLANCE



Pope Leo holds a private audience with Venezuela's Nobel peace prize Maria Corina Machado in the Vatican City on Monday. AFP

Scientists reveal what drives homosexual behaviour

► Scientists said homosexual behaviour in primates has a deep evolutionary basis and is more likely to occur in species that live in harsh environments, are hunted by predators or live in more complex societies, AFP reports from Paris.

Males or females of the same sex mounting or otherwise stimulating each other have been documented across the animal kingdom. More than 1,500 different species have been observed engaging in same-sex sexual behaviour, with some of the earliest reports dating back to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. But this relatively common behaviour was long

dismissed by the scientific community as a "Darwinian paradox". This held that homosexual behaviour in animals goes against Charles Darwin's theory of evolution because it does not pass down genes through reproduction. More recently, scientists have shown that this behaviour can in part be inherited from an animal's parents — and can provide an evolutionary advantage. "Diversity of sexual behaviour is very common in nature, among species and in animal societies — it is as important as caring for offspring, fighting off predators or foraging for food," Imperial College London biologist Vincent Savolainen said.

UN court takes up Rohingya case

► Myanmar will face accusations on Monday that it is responsible for genocide against the Rohingya minority at the top court of the United Nations, as long-awaited hearings are set to begin, AP/PTI reports from The Hague.

The West African country of Gambia first filed the case at the International Court of Justice in 2019, arguing a so-called "clearance operation" by Myanmar's military

in 2017 violated the 1948 Genocide Convention. Myanmar, which has since been taken over by the military, has denied the allegations. Without the ICJ, the military "will be accountable to no one and there will be no constraints on their persecution and ultimate destruction of the Rohingya," lawyer Paul S Reichler argued on behalf of Gambia during a preliminary hearing in 2022.



A farmer walks past a fire at a roundabout as part of national protests against the EU-Mercosur agreement in Le Havre, France on Monday. AFP

UK to settle Guantanamo lawsuits

► The British government has agreed to pay a "substantial sum" to settle a lawsuit by a Guantanamo Bay detainee who said UK intelligence agencies were complicit in his torture at secret US interrogation sites, AP/PTI reports from London.

Abu Zubaydah was thought to be a high-ranking member of al-Qaida, the terrorist group that carried out the

September 11, 2001, when he was captured in Pakistan in 2002. Zubaydah, a Palestinian born in Saudi Arabia, was tortured at so-called CIA black sites abroad before being transferred to Guantanamo Bay in 2006. Attorney Helen Duffy said the confidential settlement was symbolically and practically significant for the "intolerable suffering" Zubaydah endured.

Thousands of US nurses on strike

► Thousands of nurses in three hospital systems in New York City went on strike Monday after negotiations through the weekend failed to yield breakthroughs in their contract disputes, AP/PTI reports from New York.

Nurses were to start walking off the job at 6 am at The Mount Sinai Hospital and two of its

satellite campuses. The other affected hospitals are New York-Presbyterian and Montefiore Medical Centre in the Bronx. About 15,000 nurses are involved in the strike. The strike, which comes during a severe flu season, could potentially force the hospitals to transfer patients, cancel procedures or divert ambulances.



Participants carry a portable shrine "mikoshi" during the winter sea purification festival at a beach in Numazu, Japan, on Monday. AFP

BORDER DISPUTE

China reasserts claim over Shaksgam Valley, rejects India's objections

BEIJING, PTI

China on Monday reaffirmed its territorial claims over the Shaksgam Valley amid India's objections, asserting that Chinese infrastructure projects in the area are "beyond reproach".

India on Friday criticised China's infrastructure development activities in the Shaksgam Valley, saying it reserves the right to take necessary measures to safeguard its interests, as the region is Indian territory.

Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq km of Indian territory in the Shaks-

VALLEY OF DISCORD

■ Shaksgam Valley lies in a sensitive border region, forming part of India's Ladakh area that remains under dispute due to Pakistan's illegal cession to China in 1963.

■ India warns it may take measures to protect its interests, arguing that Chinese construction in the valley has no legal basis.

gam Valley to China in 1963 from areas under its illegal occupation.

"Shaksgam Valley is Indian territory. We have never recognised the so-called China-Pakistan 'boundary agreement' signed in 1963. We have consistently maintained that the agreement is illegal and invalid," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "We also do not recognise the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which passes through Indian territory that is under the forcible and illegal occupation of Pakistan," he added.

Responding to Jaiswal's remarks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a

media briefing that "first of all, the territory you mentioned is part of China's territory". "China's infrastructure activities in its own territory are beyond reproach," she said while replying to a question on India's criticism. Mao said China and Pakistan had signed a border agreement and determined the boundary between the two countries in the 1960s. "These are the rights of Pakistan and China as sovereign states," she said.

On India's criticism of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Mao repeated Beijing's position that the initiative is an eco-

nomic project aimed at promoting local economic and social development and improving people's livelihoods. "Such agreements and CPEC will not affect China's position on the Kashmir issue, and China's stance remains unchanged in this regard," Mao said.

China's official position on Kashmir, as repeatedly stated by Beijing, is that the "Jammu and Kashmir dispute is left over from history and should be properly and peacefully resolved in accordance with the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements".

AI in writing: Promise or peril?

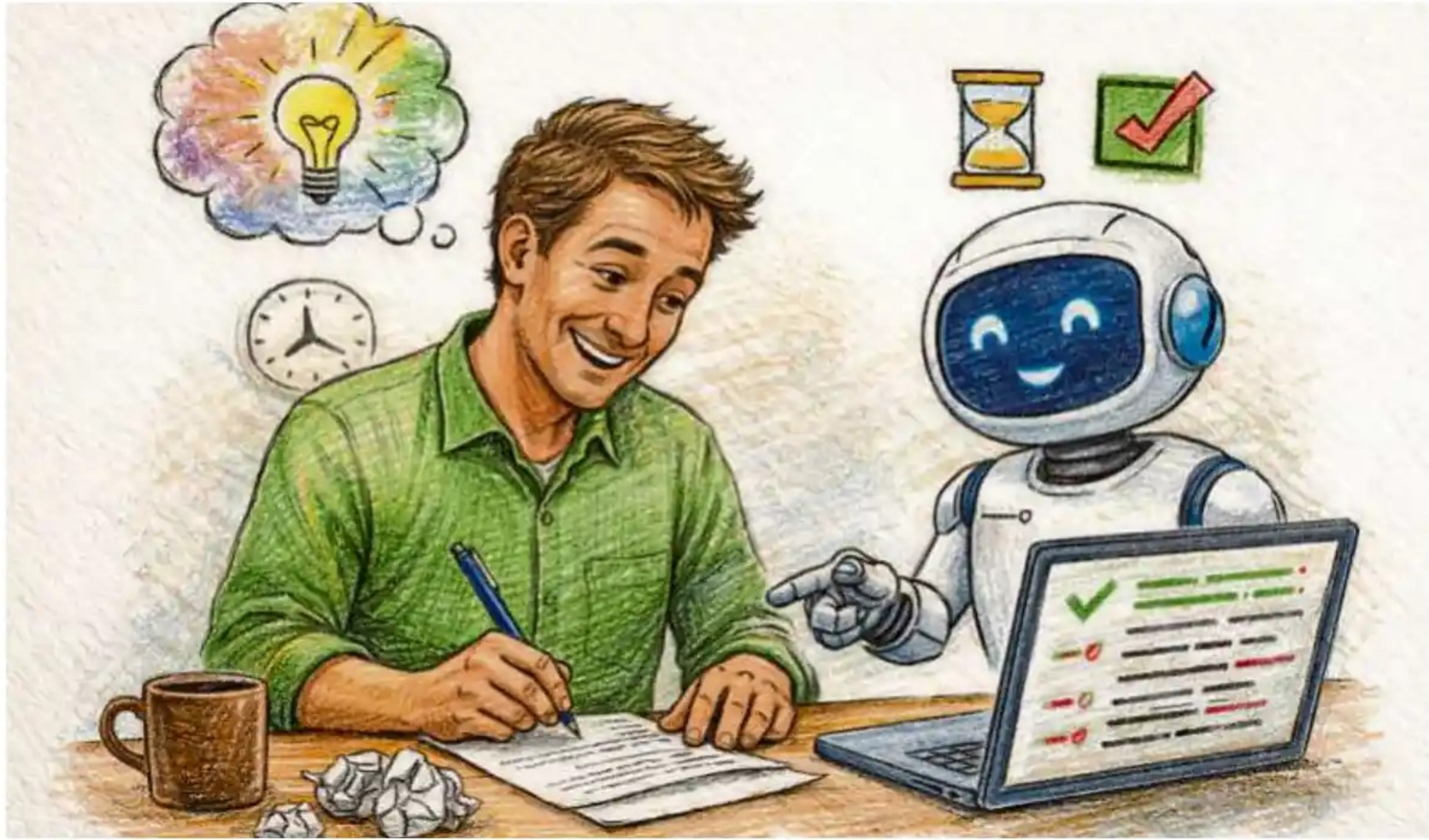
RACHNA CHHABRIA

The world of writers is a broad brushstroke. It has many divisions: authors who write books; journalists who write for newspapers and magazines; content writers who create content or blog posts for various companies; technical writers who handle technical manuals and documentation for corporations; and anonymous ghost-writers who write for others. Depending on the kind of writing, AI can be either a good friend or a foe.

For people who are authors who write books or stories, the advent of LLM/ AI hasn't changed the way they write. For them, words are bread and butter, and if lucky, jam and mayonnaise, too. Originality and creativity are their forte. People pick up an author's books because of their unique writing voice, which no AI, however advanced, capable or savvy, can replicate.

Yes, AI, with a prompt or two, can spin a story with grammar that will have an English teacher nodding in approval. But can AI penetrate an author's mind to get their viewpoint and look through the author's perspective? An author has the advantage of drawing on their personal experiences when writing, getting into a character's skin and mind. All this is what makes their writing stand out. That is the author's advantage.

The speed at which AI produces the



words makes one giddy. Speed is never an author's forte, as they like to ponder each word, savour each description, and run each sentence through their mind again and again. This is something AI doesn't need to do. That is the advantage of an AI.

But when a writer races against a deadline to submit a story or tries to finish an assignment, the speed automatically picks up.

For people who hate stringing words into a sentence without tripping over themselves or confusing readers, AI is a blessing. It can generate write-ups, both long and short, without the writer breaking a sweat. A few prompts pro-

duce pages of good writing, which, to an extent, one can even be proud to have generated — the stress is on the word "generating," not "writing".

A relative who wrote something and had it professionally edited told me that he ran the professionally edited version through an AI platform for a grammatical check. The platform went a step further: it improved the writing, corrected the grammar, made the sentences racy and crisp, and, overall, perked up the writing by restructuring everything.

He sent me both versions without telling me which was the human's edit and which was the AI's. I liked a version. Then he told me that it was the AI

version.

I was quite awestruck by AI's efficiency. Because as a writer and author, I pride myself on my creativity, on my originality, my quirky way of thinking and my unique voice, aka writing style, which I think no AI can replicate or match. I pat myself on my back for my ability to string words in a way that leaves the readers stunned. So, if AI can replace me, I would be jobless.

A young boy told me he writes all his emails using AI, and since these tools came out, he hasn't written a single email. AI has made people lazy. Most people always hated writing, and now AI can do it for them.

It won't be surprising if publishers use AI to write a book, or, shall I say, to generate it. Give a flurry of prompts, include a few phrases and type some sentences and bingo, pages are ready, with perfect grammar, sentence structure and style. AI definitely won't suffer from writer's block or let deadlines whoosh past. It has surely replaced some content and technical writers because it does a good job, is cheaper, works at dizzying speed, and suggests and brainstorm before one can even blink.

An editor I knew ran all the articles

More important is the ethical question. Who owns the copyright of the write-ups or creations made using these platforms?

up replacing editors, too.

These thoughts pose some questions. Can AI invest in research like a writer? Will that research be authentic, meticulous, and unbiased? Can AI make its writing emotionally resonant to the readers, as writers do? Can AI beat a writer's viewpoint? Important questions that need answers.

More important is the ethical question. Who owns the copyright for writing or creating on these platforms? And if, by chance, someone else types in the same prompts, cues, catchphrases, and information, will the same writing appear on their screen? Won't figuring out copying become tricky in such cases?

Perhaps in future, writers will use AI as an ally, as an assistant, to brainstorm, fix grammatical errors, tweak sentences, and make the entire write-up more readable, before they hit the send button. Will it replace a writer? Perhaps not.

(The author is a creative writer)

BULLETIN BOARD

GSK Global Capability Centre Scholarship Program

Students of first year of an MBBS programme at a government medical college with at least 65% marks in Class 12 board examinations and a family annual income below Rs 6 lakh can apply to this programme. Selected students will receive a scholarship of up to INR 1,00,000 per year for 4.5 years. Apply before January 20 at <https://t.ly/hunYC>

Scholarship for disabled

The Aadhar Kaushal Scholarship Program 2025-26 is inviting applications from students with physical disabilities pursuing general or professional undergraduate courses with minimum of 60% marks and a family income of less than Rs 3 lakh. Scholarship amount: Rs 10,000 to 50,000. Deadline: January 13. Apply at: <https://t.ly/cX6Cy>

Performance marketing internship

Brandhigh.co is hiring performance marketing interns who can work from home. Students with knowledge of Marketing, Google Ads, Facebook Ads, Instagram Ads, Market Research, and SEO strategy can apply by February 6. The stipend is Rs 10,000-15,000 /month. Apply at: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7yrxut>.

Human resources internship

DataVinci Private Limited is hiring a human resources (HR) intern who can work from home. Students with proficiency in written and spoken English and with attention to detail, can apply by February 6. The stipend is Rs 2,000-5,000 /month. Apply at: <https://shorturl.at/byPYT>.

Crypto content writer internship

Trade Brains is hiring crypto content writer interns in Bengaluru. Students with knowledge of financial literacy and investing can apply by February 6. The stipend is Rs 10,000-12,000 /month. Apply at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8yn8ku>.

Content marketing internship

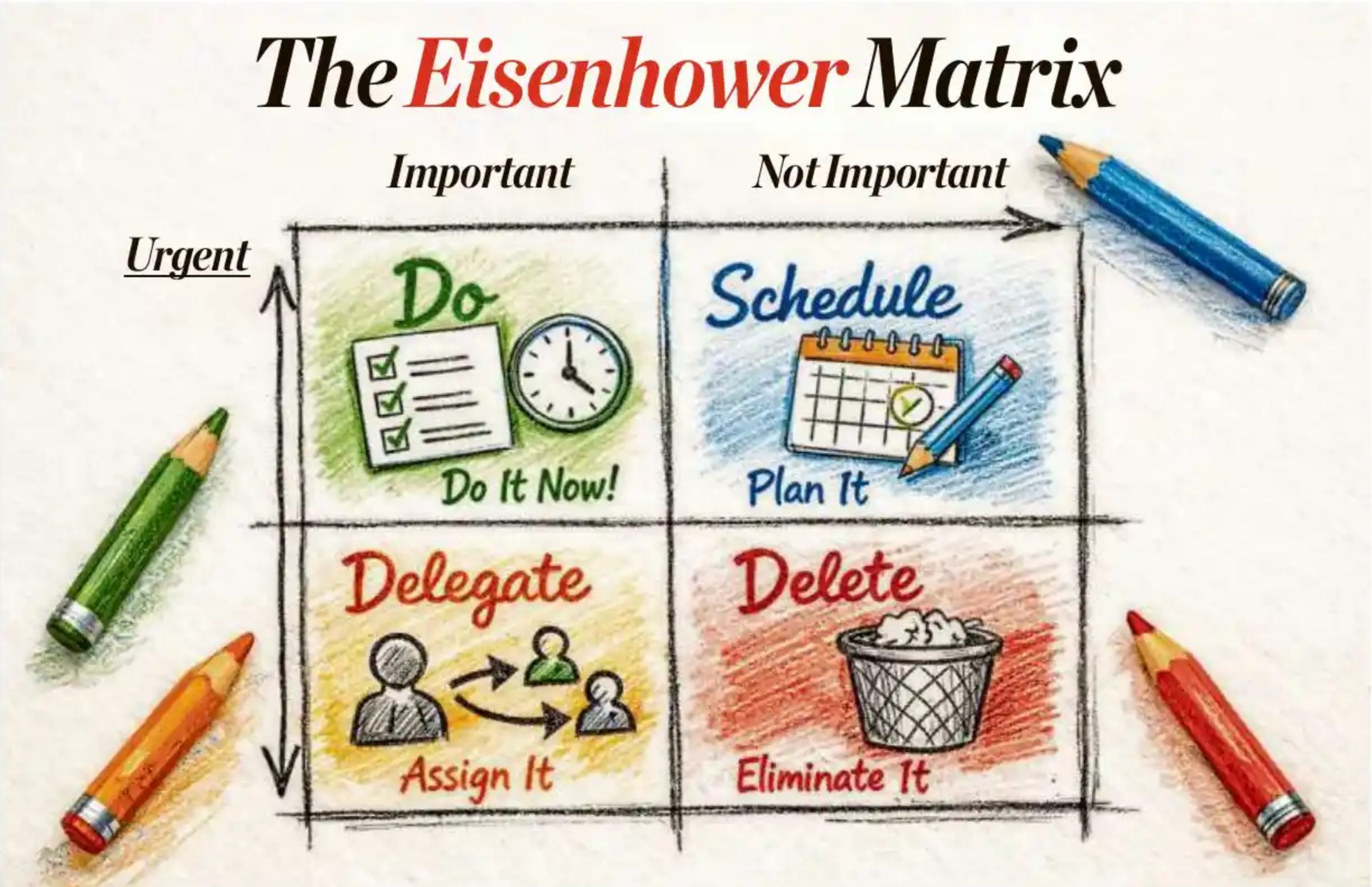
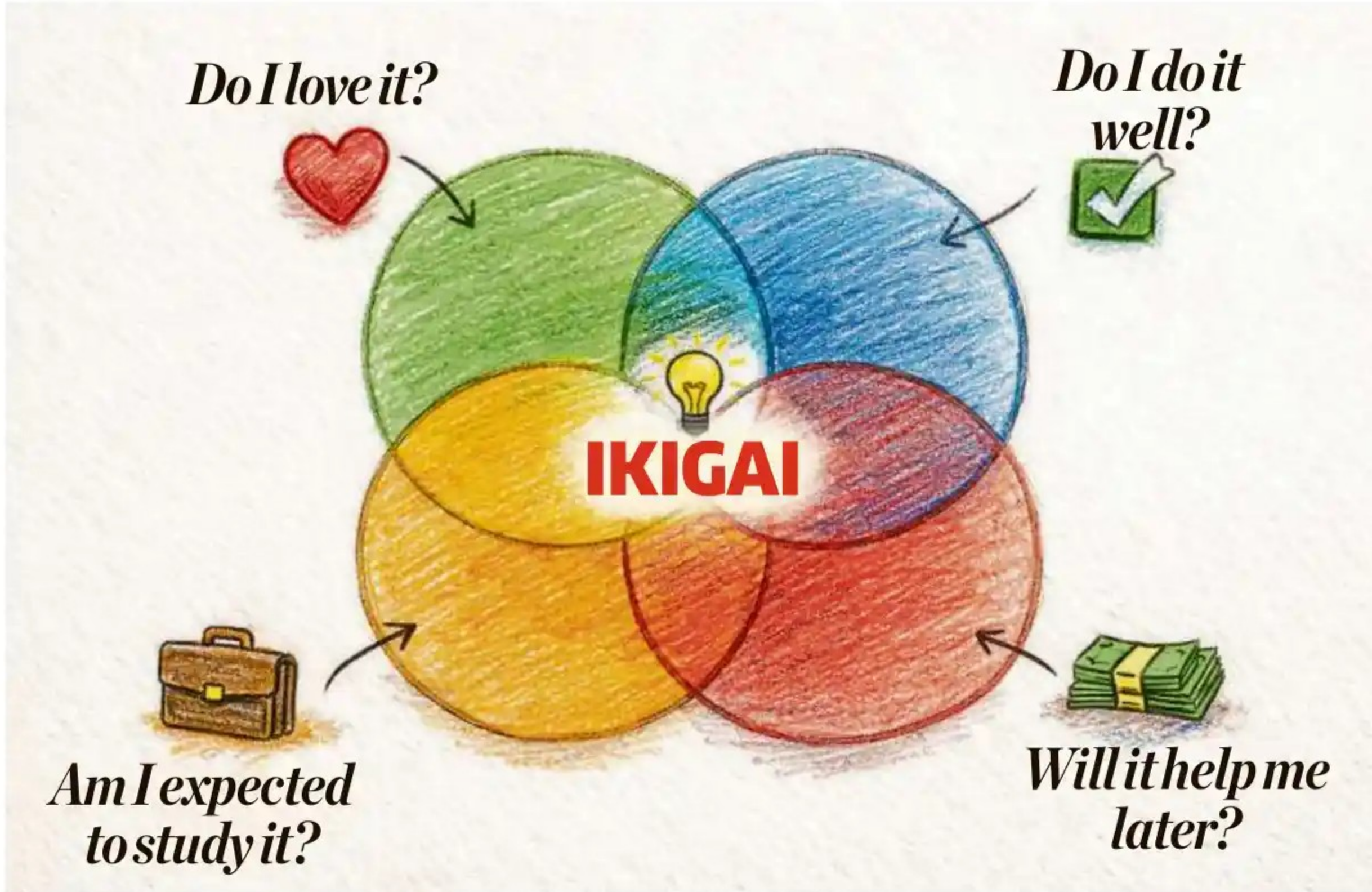
CXO Branding is hiring content and social media marketing interns in Bengaluru. Students with knowledge of branding, product lifecycle management (PLM), SEO and Social Media Marketing can apply by February 5. The stipend is Rs 9,000-21,000 /month. Apply at: <https://shorturl.at/9XyFa>.

Chess mentorship

The 'nurrt Nurturing Minds with Chess program is inviting students aged 5 to 25 to sign up for a mentorship course. Those with annual income of less than 8 lakh can avail 90% scholarship. Apply at: <https://t.ly/1IIRG8>

Aiming for excellence: Plan versus hope

Motivation can only give a start to learning. Guarded focus and steady study can build real skill and confidence, writes Jeevakumar R



Do you have a new year resolution? Research shows that only about 8 per cent of people keep. Motivation and resolutions feel good. It provides a brief surge of energy. But that burst does not build skill or steady learning output. Motivation starts action, but often ends soon. It fails when people treat it as the plan. A more effective method for studying is to align purpose, attention, and practice.

Replace motivation with alignment. Name a purpose. Guard your attention. Build a simple practice plan. These three habits link into what I call the triple thread. Purpose points the work where attention turns intent into real hours, and practice grows skill through repeated, focused effort.

Triple thread of learning

We know that purpose gives direction. But how to get a direction, towards the alignment? Use a simple Ikigai check. List what you love, what you do well, what people need, and what you can

be paid for. Pick two or three items to start. A named purpose makes it easy to decide what to do and what to drop.

To manage attention, use the Eisenhower Matrix to quickly sort study tasks. Draw four boxes. Label them: Do Now, Schedule, Delegate, and Delete. Put urgent and important tasks in Do Now. Put important but not urgent tasks in the schedule. Put urgent but not important tasks in Delegate. Put tasks that are neither urgent nor important in Delete.

This means: Do exam-day revision now. Schedule project work and weekly study blocks. Delegate or limit group logistics or non-study chores. Delete social scrolling and low-value busy work. If you spot a busy work map, delete it. Check the matrix each morning and move items across boxes as priorities shift. Block time for focused work and keep it uninterrupted.

Deep work means sustained attention without switching tasks. Studies show that deep work improves learning and output. The practice of blocking quiet hours raises the quality of what you fin-

ish. Practice grows skill. Adopt a growth mindset. Treat skill as something you can expand through steady effort and feedback. Repeat short, focused sessions and record small gains each week. This practice creates progress that motivation cannot match.

This is a simple discipline. A short, concrete plan can precede motivation. Write one monthly action plan and make it visible. Block two or three deep work sessions each day. Keep these sessions free of calls, email, and social checks. Review progress every morning and again weekly. Make small, clear edits to the plan after each review.

Drop busy work and pseudo-study time

Stop tasks that do not show measurable outcomes. Use the saved time for skill work that moves something you care about. Build relationships without seeking instant returns. Small favours and steady help expand access and open options later.

Here is a real example from media

work. At Asianet in the early 2000s, my team chased client meetings with high motivation. The team believed more meetings meant more business. We named a clearer purpose: grow viewership, not meetings.

We then shifted attention to expanding distribution through local cable operators. We blocked time for follow-ups and data checks each week. We discontinued low-value tasks that yielded no measurable gains among the audience.

The result came quickly. Audience numbers rose, and advertisers responded. That change came from aligning purpose, attention, and practice, not from a fresh burst of will.

Why the alignment approach works

Motivation gives a start. Alignment produces finish. Name the single project you want to move and block a focused time for it. Do one specific task in that hour and record the result. You can

see small aligned moves add up. They replace hope with steady, measurable progress.

If you can treat study as a design choice, not a mood, and use tools such as Ikigai to articulate the purpose and the Eisenhower Matrix to select daily work, while protecting focused time and practising with a clear plan, then alignment occurs. Do one aligned hour today and note the result. Repeat that hour three times this week. Small, steady choices build real skill and lasting results in learning and life.

(The author is a media professional and an academic)

Startups and jobs: Lessons from India's entrepreneurship boom

V PRADEEP KUMAR



Critics often argue that startups chase valuation over sustainability, raising funds quickly and collapsing just as fast. While some data support this view, it is equally true that startups have created millions of jobs in India over the past decade. Their role in shaping employment opportunities and career paths is therefore worth closer examination.

Globally, 80–90% of startups fail, with nearly 10% shutting down in the very first year. Most collapse within five years due to poor product-market fit, cash-flow challenges, weak strategy, or competitive pressures. These failures are largely the result of structural business challenges and market dynamics rather than entrepreneurial intent.

Although comprehensive global data on job creation is scarce, experts broadly agree that new jobs created by startups outweigh job losses from closures. Surviving and scaling ventures continue to play a significant role in employment creation, even if failures attract more headlines. The narrative of "failure" often overshadows the fact that startups remain powerful engines of innovation and job growth.

India mirrors these global trends but with clearer evidence. Under the Startup India programme, 1.97 lakh enterprises were registered by October 2025, creating over 21 lakh direct jobs despite 6,385 closures. This demonstrates that net job creation in the ecosystem is substantially positive.

Encouragingly, the Aventus Wealth Hurun India Uth series 2025 highlight-

ed 79 entrepreneurs under 30, who collectively raised USD 5.2 billion and generated 64,000 jobs. Sectoral contributions are also noteworthy: IT services added 2.04 lakh jobs, life sciences 1.47 lakh, and education over 90,000. These figures align with the rise of the sunshine industries, which continue to attract talent and investment.

Management perspective One striking trend is the declining lifespan of companies. After averaging 75 years over the last century, the duration has declined to approximately 15 years today and is expected to shrink further. This turbulence is driven by several factors:

Technological disruption: Artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and digital platforms have rendered many traditional business models obsolete.

Changing consumer preferences: Informed consumers demand better products and services, shortening

product life cycles and forcing constant innovation.

Globalisation and competition: India's market size and GDP growth attract global brands, intensifying competition that local startups often struggle to withstand.

Management failures: Poor strategy, weak leadership, lack of innovation, and neglect of branding accelerate decline.

Short-term focus: Investor pressure drives promoters to chase revenue and valuation, over long-term profitability, undermining sustainability.

These factors highlight the importance of strong management practices. Startups must balance agility with foresight, ensuring that short-term gains do not compromise long-term viability.

The forward outlook

Startup India envisions transforming India from a nation of "job seekers to job creators." While startups are net job creators, unemployment remains around 5%. The challenge lies in building a balanced ecosystem that sustains employment and reduces failures. Key priorities include:

Sustainable entrepreneurship: Encourage startups to shift focus from valuation to profitability and longevity.

Policy and funding support: Provide soft loans linked to job creation, along with mentorship and incubation, to mitigate early-stage pitfalls.

Employment stability: Promote professional HR practices, reskilling, redeployment, and contingency planning.

Leveraging returning talent: Global developments are driving skilled professionals back to India. Their expertise

and resources can strengthen startups and entrepreneurial ventures.

Regulatory and legal support: Startups often struggle to navigate complex legal frameworks, taxation policies, and compliance requirements. We should establish accessible guidance and resources that help entrepreneurs manage these challenges with confidence.

In developed economies, job creation from new businesses barely outpaces losses from closures. In India, however, startups have generated substantial employment and career opportunities, far exceeding losses. Yet, high failure rates remain a serious concern that policymakers, investors, and entrepreneurs must address collectively.

In the meantime, students seeking employment with startups should exercise caution by evaluating the business's viability and the promoters' backgrounds and credibility. This is particularly important, as career stability in young ventures often depends on the strength of leadership and the clarity of business models.

Finally, the real startup story is not only about whether they create jobs—which they certainly do—but whether they can sustain businesses over the long term and contribute meaningfully to India's growth trajectory.

(The author is a management and career consultant)

Questions? Feedback?
dheducation@deccanherald.co.in



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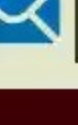
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TCS Q3 net profit down 14%

Rs 2,128 cr statutory impact from new labour codes

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

India's largest IT services firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Monday posted a 14% decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 10,657 crore for the December quarter, compared to Rs 12,380 crore posted in the year-ago period, due to Rs 2,128 crore statutory impact of new labour codes.

The company in an exchange filing reported unallocable expenses amounting to Rs 5,309 crore, which includes Rs 2,128 crore new labour codes impact. The incremental impact consisted of gratuity of Rs 1,816 crore and long-term compensated absences of Rs 312 crore, primarily arising from change in wage definition, the company said in its filings.

The company's revenue from operations stood at Rs 67,087 crore, a 5% increase

compared to Rs 63,973 crore in Q3FY25.

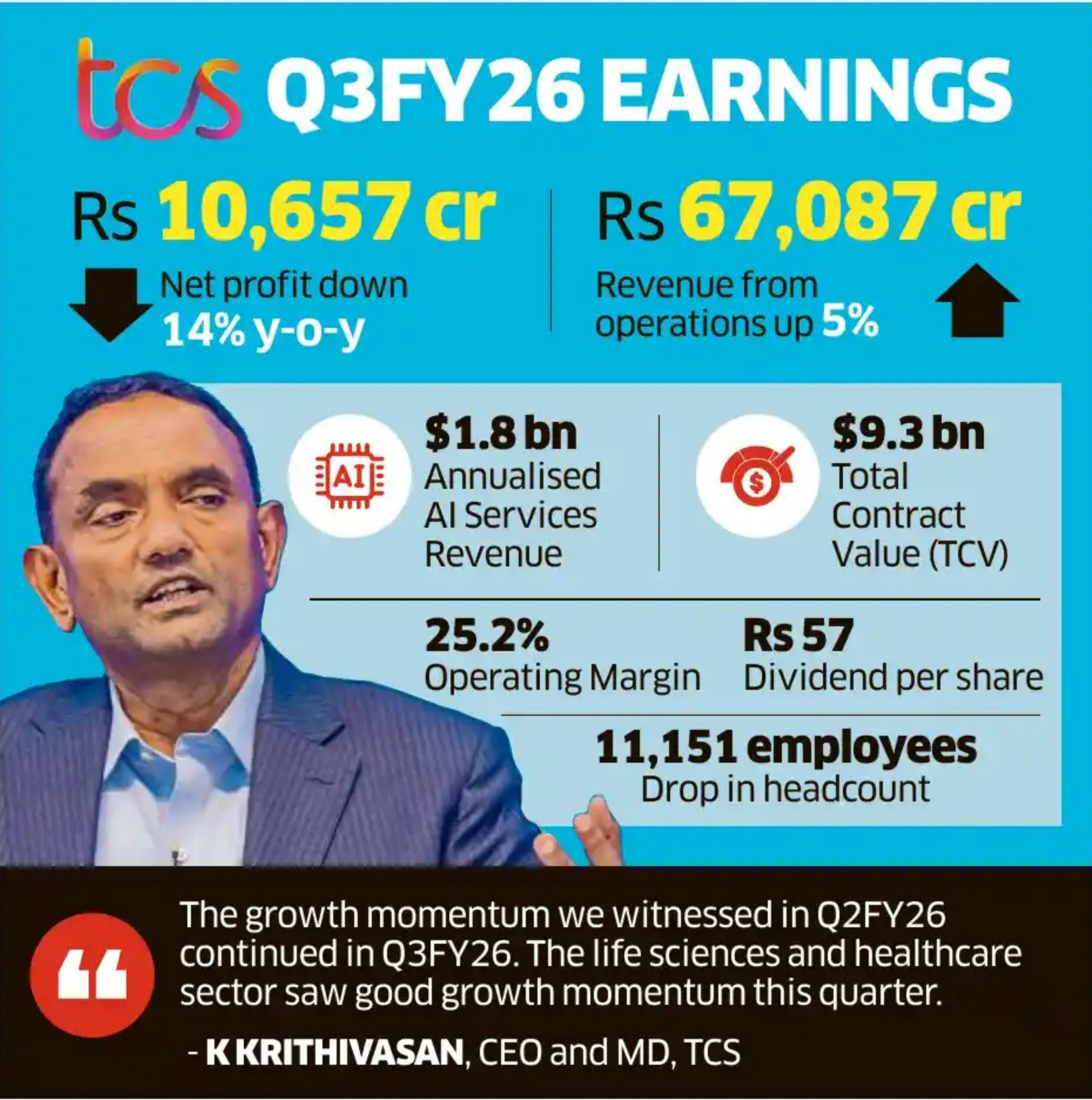
At the company's analysts call, the company's CFO Samir Seksaria said the impact of this (new labour codes) will be 10-15 basis points.

TCS reported that its annualised AI services revenue stood at \$1.8 billion, up 17.3% q-o-q in Constant Currency. The company's operating margin during the quarter stood at 25.2% and total contract value (TCV) was at \$9.3 billion.

"The growth momentum we witnessed in Q2FY26 continued in Q3FY26," TCS CEO and MD K Krithivasan said, adding that the overall demand environment is improving and the trend continues.

The CEO said that with the leadership it is gaining in AI, they are confident of a good CY2026.

The company's BFSI witnessed 1.6% y-o-y growth and its life sciences and healthcare



industry grew 2.2% y-o-y in Q3. "The life sciences and healthcare sector saw good growth momentum this quarter. The sector is undergoing multiple shifts across industry segments led by regulatory interventions, impact of AI, risk and security challenges and changing consumer behaviour," he said.

TCS Executive Director - President and COO Aarthi Subramanian said the company

continued to see AI acceleration in Q3. "Our customers continue to invest in Cloud, Data, Cyber and Enterprise Transformations to build readiness for AI. We further strengthened our Salesforce capabilities with the Coastal Cloud acquisition, building on our investment in ListEngage," she said.

TCS Chief HR Officer Sudeep Kunnumal said that as

of Q3, the company has over 2,17,000 associates with advanced AI skills. "We doubled our intake of fresh graduates with higher order skills," he said.

Headcount down by over 11,000

The company's headcount was down 11,151 in Q3 and at the end of the quarter, its total employees stood at 5,82,163. In the previous quarter too, its workforce declined by 19,755 employees.

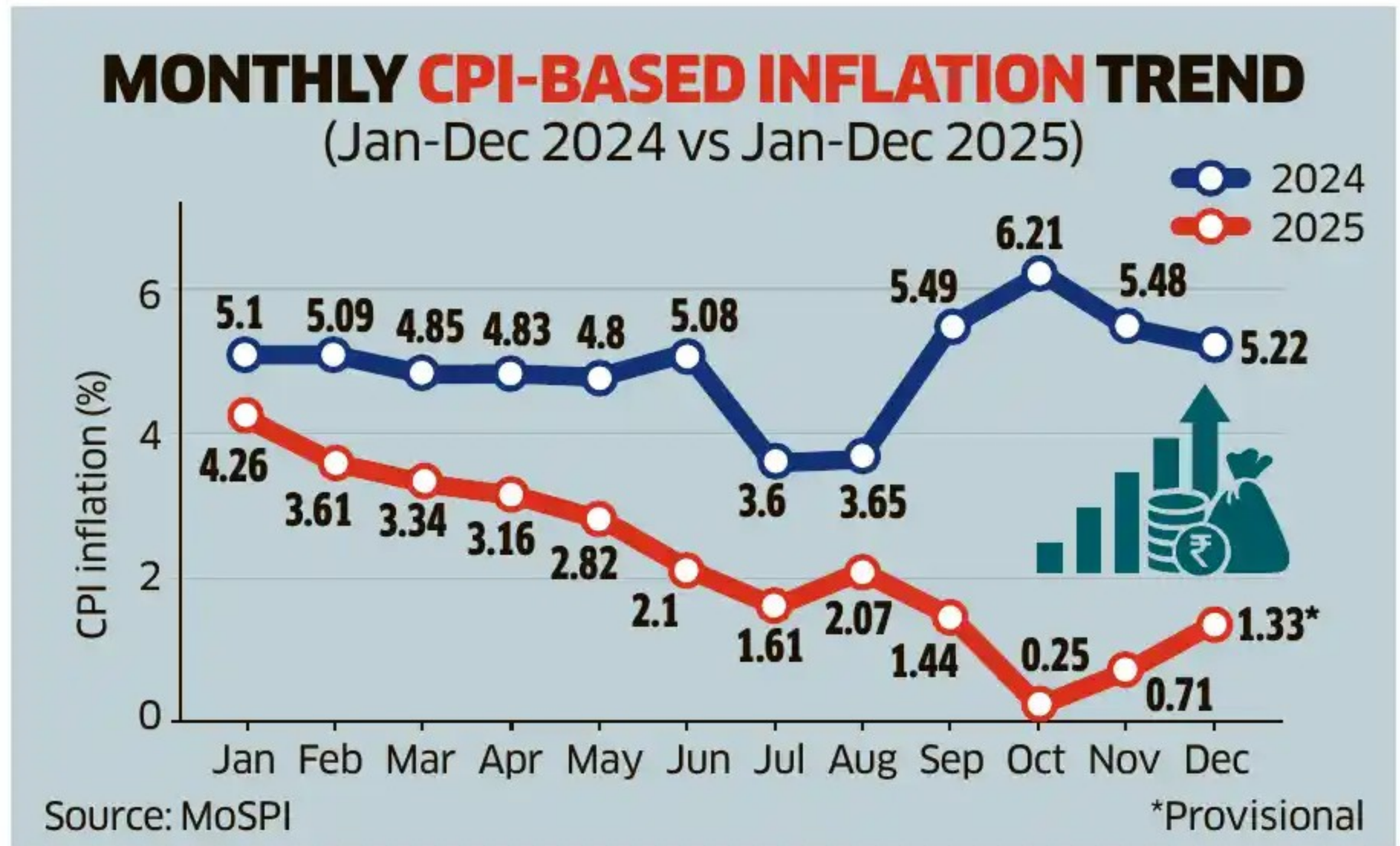
On the headcount reduction, Nascent Information Technology Employees Senate NITES President Harpreet Singh Saluja said the recent quarterly disclosures by TCS have once again exposed a serious disconnect between the company's public narrative and the reality faced by employees. "This sharp reduction, coupled with an attrition rate of around 13.5% clearly establishes that the company is undergoing large-scale workforce rationalisation and not merely routine attrition, as it seeks to portray," he said.

Last July, the company announced job cuts that will impact 2% of its global workforce or about 12,250 employees.

Retail inflation rises to 1.33% in Dec on high gold, food prices

Cheaper wheat, rice drag cereal inflation into negative

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS



India's annual retail inflation rose to a three-month high of 1.33% in December after hitting a record low of 0.25% in October, as prices of gold, silver and some food items jumped, official data showed on Monday.

Despite the uptick, the headline inflation remained below the RBI's lower tolerance threshold of 2% for the fourth straight month. The Consumer Price Index-based (CPI) inflation stood at 0.71% in November. In September, it was recorded at 1.44%.

Prices of some food items firmed up. However, food inflation, which accounts for nearly half of the CPI basket, remained in the negative zone for the seventh month in a row.

Food deflation narrowed to 2.71% in December, from 3.91% in the previous month and 5.02% recorded in October. This means, in December, general food prices were lower when compared with the same month last year.

There was a jump in the prices of meat, fish and eggs, while the pace of decline in vegetables prices narrowed. Vegetables deflation narrowed to 18.47% in December, from 22.20% in the previous month.

Cereals inflation entered the negative territory for the first time since September 2021, driven by decline in prices of wheat and rice. December recorded 0.35% deflation

in cereals.

Urban inflation increased from 1.4% in November to 2.03% December, while rural inflation firmed up from 0.10% to 0.76% during this period.

There was a wide regional variation in the price rise. Kerala witnessed 9.49% inflation in December against the national average of 1.33%. Karnataka posted inflation of 2.99% during the month under review, the second highest. Andhra Pradesh (2.71%); Tamil Nadu (2.67%) and Jammu & Kashmir (2.26%) also registered higher inflation than the national average. On the other hand, states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Assam recorded deflation.

Core inflation (which excludes food and fuel) rose to 4.6% in December from 4.3% in the previous month, driven by the jump in gold prices. Inflation in gold, silver and ornaments climbed to a high of 70.4% in December — gold inflation was up 68.7%, while silver 97.1%. Excluding gold, core inflation was marginally higher at 2.55% from 2.5% in November.

"Despite upward pressure from precious metals, the positive impact of GST rationalisation and continued deflation in the food and beverages category helped keep overall

inflation contained," said Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings.

Inflation to firm up further, say analysts

According to analysts, inflation is likely to rise in the coming months as the impact of high base effect would wane further.

"We expect CPI inflation to rise to 5% in fiscal 2027, from an estimated 2.5% in the current fiscal as food inflation normalises," said Dipti Deshpande, Principal Economist, Crisil.

"Weak global crude prices should keep fuel inflation contained, while the lingering impact of GST rate cuts should help keep the lid on core inflation until the first half of next fiscal," Deshpande said.

According to CareEdge Ratings, the retail inflation is expected to edge higher, but remain below the RBI's 4% target for the rest of 2025-26.

"With the favourable base effect fading away, the retail inflation is expected to pick up from Q4FY26 onwards," said Paras Jasrai, Associate Director, India Ratings and Research, adding that the inflation expected to average 2.6% in January-March quarter against a record low of 0.8% registered in Q3 of the current financial year.

HCLTech Q3 net profit declines 11% to Rs 4,076 cr

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

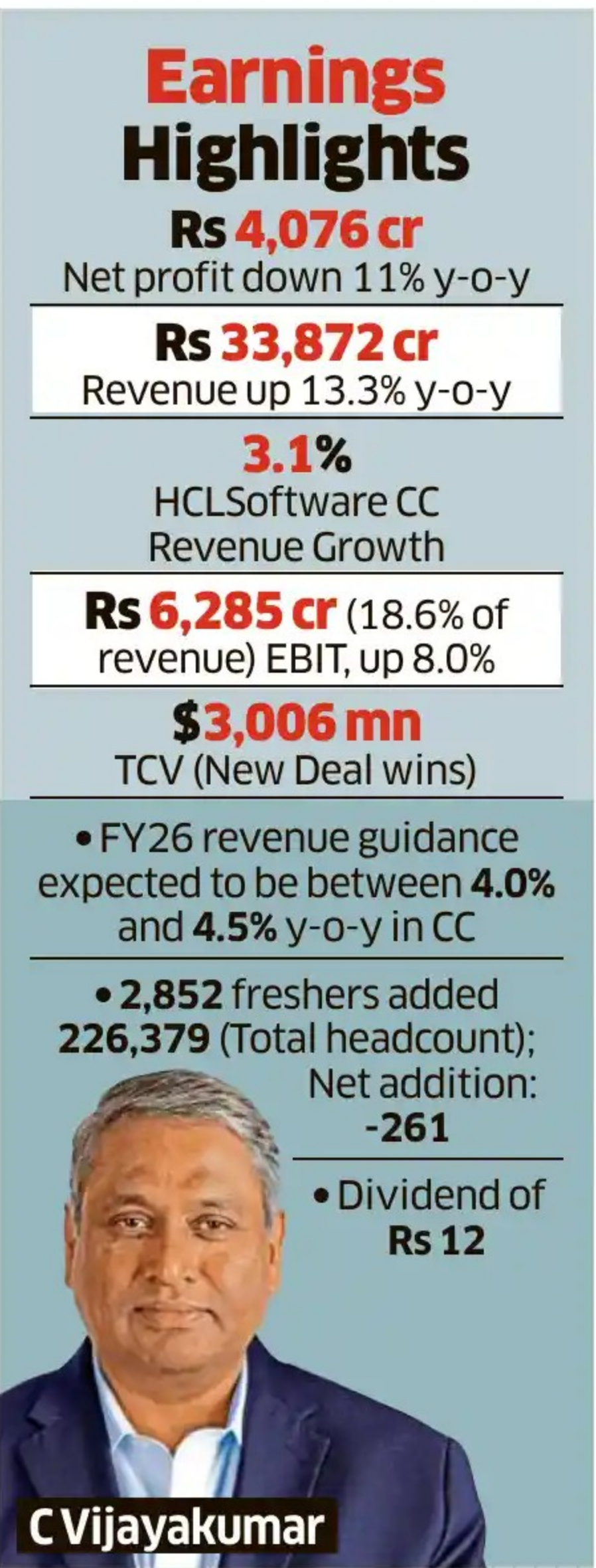
IT services firm HCLTech on Monday posted an 11% decline in its consolidated net profit for the quarter ended December 2025, at Rs 4,076 crore, compared to Rs 4,591 crore in the year-ago period mainly due to a one-time impact of new labour codes.

In a regulatory filing, the company said the New Labour Codes have resulted in an estimated one-time increase in provision for employee benefits of the Group and the company of Rs 956 crore and Rs 948 crore, respectively. The new labour codes came into effect on November 21.

The company's revenue from operations beat analysts' estimates and stood at Rs 33,872 crore, up 13.3% y-o-y. The IT firm had reported Rs 29,890 crore revenue in the year-ago period. The company has narrowed its FY26 revenue forecast and it is expected to be between 4% and 4.5% y-o-y in CC.

Its new deal wins stood at \$3,006 million in the December quarter, up 43.5% y-o-y. The company's EBIT was at Rs 6,285 crore, up 8.0% y-o-y. The EBIT Margin includes 81 bps impact of restructuring cost.

HCLTech CEO and MD CVijayakumar said in a post-earnings press conference that the



company's pipeline continues to demonstrate growth. "While uncertainty persists in the global market leading to slow spending growth, the fundamental demand for technology as a driver for business transformation remains structurally intact," he said, adding that discretionary spending is emerging in new pockets.

The company's CFO Shiv

Walia said Q3 EBIT margins, excluding the one-time impact of New Labour Codes, came in at 18.6% (up 111 bps QoQ).

Vijayakumar added that the company is well-positioned to address evolving AI demand of its clients across industries and service lines.

The firm's financial services vertical grew 8.1% y-o-y and manufacturing grew 1.8%.

HCLTech Chief People Officer Ram Sundararajan said the company added 2,852 freshers in Q3. "So far in this fiscal, we have added 10,032 freshers," he said.

However, the company's net addition declined by 261 employees in Q3, taking its total employee base to 2,26,379. The company's attrition stood at 12.4%, down from 13.2% in Q3 of last year.

According to Gartner Principal Analyst Shubham Rathore, the company's growth comes as enterprise IT spending continues to expand, with Gartner forecasting sustained investment in AI and digital transformation. HCLTech's advanced AI services grew nearly 20% sequentially, and recent acquisitions and strategic partnerships have further strengthened its portfolio, enabling the company to address evolving client needs across industries.

The company has declared a dividend of Rs 12 per share.

Economy to grow at 7% in FY27: BMI

NEW DELHI, PTI: Fitch Group company BMI on Monday forecast a 7.4% growth for the current fiscal and 7% for FY27, saying a favourable policy environment bodes well for India's economic outlook.

It said that monetary and regulatory measures should stimulate investment and consumption over the 2026-27 fiscal. "A strong advanced estimate of the current fiscal year's GDP, rising US-bound merchandise exports during the past two months, and a favourable policy environ-

ment bodes well for India's economic outlook," BMI said in a report.

The National Statistics Office has projected a 7.4% GDP expansion for FY2025-26 (April-March). This implies that the government expects GDP will grow by around 7% year-on-year on average in the second half of the fiscal year.

BMI revised upwards GDP forecast for 2025-26 to 7.4%, up from 7.2% projected earlier. It now expects GDP to rise by 7% in FY2026-27, up from 6.6% estimated previously.

Silver soars 6% to record Rs 2.65 lakh/kg

NEW DELHI, PTI: Silver prices rallied sharply by Rs 15,000 to hit a lifetime high of Rs 2,65,000 per kg in the national capital on Monday, and gold advanced to a fresh record of Rs 1,44,600 per 10 grams, mirroring strong gains in the global markets.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, silver soared by Rs 15,000, or 6%, to touch a new peak of Rs 2,65,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from the previous close of Rs 2,50,000 per kg.

In addition, gold of 99.9% purity appreciated by Rs 2,900, or 2.05%, to hit a lifetime high of Rs 1,44,600 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It had ended at

Rs 1,41,700 per 10 grams on Friday.

In the international market, spot gold surged past the \$4,600 per ounce level for the first time. The yellow metal gained \$90.72, or 2%, to touch a record \$4,601.69 per ounce.

"Gold has responded positively, and jumped to the \$4,600 per ounce level, while silver has seen an even sharper surge to \$84 per ounce, highlighting its higher beta in risk-sensitive environments," Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at LemonnMarketsDesk, said.

Spot silver in the international trade rose by \$4.3, or nearly 6%, to touch a record of \$84.61 per ounce.

Sensex up 300 pts

MUMBAI, PTI: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty found firmer ground on Monday after facing a massive drubbing in the past five trading sessions, propelled by bargain hunting in energy, banking and metal stocks amid renewed optimism surrounding a potential India-US trade deal.

In volatile trading, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 301.93 points, or 0.36%, to settle at 83,878.17.

The 50-share NSE Nifty edged higher by 106.95 points, or 0.42%, to 25,790.25.

Paramount Skydance sues Warner Bros

BENGALURU, REUTERS: Paramount Skydance on Monday sued Warner Bros Discovery for more information on a rival \$82.7 billion deal with Netflix, escalating a battle to take control of the Hollywood studio.

The company added it plans to nominate directors to Warner Bros Discovery's board to convince shareholders that its

hostile \$30-per-share cash bid is superior to the \$27.75-per-share cash-and-stock offer from Netflix. In a letter to shareholders, Paramount said it would propose an amendment to Warner Bros' bylaws that would require shareholder approval for any separation of its cable TV business, which is key to the Netflix deal.

**BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD**

INVITATION FOR TENDER
(only through KPP-Portal)

BWSSB invites Tenders from Registered Contractors for the following works.

Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-560009.

Division	IFT Number	Amount put to Tender	Last date & Time for Submission of Tender	Date & Time for Opening of Tender
		EMD Amount		
South West-2	BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/4491/2025-26 Date: 12.01.2026	Rs.28,64,772/-	19.01.2026 upto 5:00 PM	21.01.2026 after 10.30 AM
		Rs.57,300/-		

Sd/- Executive Engineer (South-West-2)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> For further details contact the abovesigned office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/4988/SSC/2025-26

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ

ಪಂಚಾಯತ್ ರಾಜ್ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ,
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.

ಸಂ:ಕಾಮಾಇಂ/ಪಂರಾಇಂ/ಎ/ದಾ/ಸ.ಇಂ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/2025-26/2236
ದಿನಾಂಕ:-12/01/2026

ಸಂಕ್ಷಿಪ್ತ ಅಲ್ಲುವದಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟನೆ

(“ಕೆಪಿಪಿ-ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಮಂಟ್” ಮೂಲಕ)

ಈ ವಿಭಾಗ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ 2025-26 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳ ಮೂಲಸೌಕರ್ಯ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಮತ್ತು 2024-25 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಮಳೆಹಾನಿ ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿ ಅನುಮೋದನೆಯಾದ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಅಲ್ಲುವಾಲರ ಪದವಾಗಿ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ಹಾಗೂ ಕೆಪಿಪಿ-ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಮಂಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಂದಾಯಿಸಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇಲಾಖಾ ನಿಯಮಾವಳಿಯ ಮೇರೆಗೆ ಕೆಪಿಪಿ-ಪೂರೈಕೆ ಮಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಐಟಿಎಂಎಲ್ ಏಕ್ ಮತ್ತು ಡಿ-ಲಕ್ಮೋಟಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಕೈಬಿಟ್ಟು ನಮೂನೆ-3ರಲ್ಲಿ ಅಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಒಟ್ಟು ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:09 (ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರಿಂಗ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 22899, 22900, 22901, 22902, 22903, 22904, 22905, 22906 & 22946) ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳು ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.42.06 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ 84.00 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳವರೆಗೆ ಇರುತ್ತವೆ. ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಸ್ವರೂಪ ರಸ್ತೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸೇತುವೆ ನಿರ್ಮಾಣ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಘರಾಂಗಳನ್ನು ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12/01/2025 ರಿಂದ ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 19/01/2026 ಸಂಜೆ 4.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಈ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08192-250156 ಅಥವಾ www.KPPPP.karnataka.gov.in ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ವಾಸಾಇ/ಡಿಎಚ್/642/ ಕೆಎಸ್ ಎಂಎಂ/2025-26 ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಪಂ.ರಾ.ಇಂ.ವಿಭಾಗ, ದಾವಣಗೆರೆ.

**GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA**

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
DIVISION KOPPAL. Phone No:08539-222318.email:eePWDkpl2@gmail.com

IFT No. PWD:DK:TDR:KW-1&2:2025-26: 3585 Date:12-01-2026.

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

The Executive Engineer, Public works Department Division Koppal invites tenders from the eligible tenderers as per standard bid documents 1&2 on <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> Portal. Head of Account : 2059 (Non Plan), 2216 (Non Plan), 8443 Deposit Contribution and KKRDB Macro Social General).Two cover Tender procedure as per Rule 28 of the KTPP Act shall be followed. For more information the contractor can contact the under signed during office hours on Phone No. 08539 – 222318 and all informations regarding tenders can be had from website <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. Total No of Works:08 (Work Indent No: 29855, 30205, 29849, 30208, 29780, 29782, 29337, 29673). Last Date & Time for receipt of tenders 20-01-2026 Time 16.00 and Date and Time for Tender opening 21-01-2026 Time 16.30. Minimum & Maximum Estimate Amount Rs. 5.00 Lakhs & Rs. 56.00 Lakhs respectively.. The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website address, EMD, Time for Tender, Reservation Queries/Clarification, Date & Other information as mentioned in KPPPP Portal. any changes either in tender date or any other condition tenderers can view in <http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> portal.

Sd/- EE, PWD Division, Koppal

DIPR/Koppal/619/KSMCA/2025-26

**Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Energy & Development**

(Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Dept., GoK)

Srirampura Cross, Jakkur, Bengaluru - 560 064

No.MGI/EDP/59/2025-26 Date: 09.01.2026

Training on Solar PV Rooftop Technology

Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Energy & Development, Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru invites application for Five (5) Days Entrepreneurship Development Program on “Solar PV Rooftop Technology” (Starting from 27.01.2026) at “MGIRED Campus, Srirampura Cross, Jakkur, Bengaluru – 560 064”. The training covers Technology and Business Opportunities in Solar PV Sector (Accommodation and food facilities may be availed by the applicant if required, chargeable as per Institute norms). Registration Fees Rs.500/- per Candidate (Non-refundable). For eligibility and more details please visit website: <https://www.mgired.karnataka.gov.in> and e-mail the filled application form to mgired-karnataka@ka.gov.in / mgiredblr@gmail.com (Last date to submit application 23.01.2026).

Contact : Mobile Nos. 7611757523 / 8618247700 / 7483858279 / 7899054642 Ph. 080-23626359

Sd/- Executive Director

Pharma industry seeks R&D sops, simplification of regulatory framework in Budget

NEW DELHI, PTI: The government should look at offering globally-competitive R&D incentives and fiscal support for clinical research to the domestic pharma industry in the upcoming Budget in order to help it transform into an innovation-led USD 130-billion sector by 2030, according to industry bodies.

The policymakers should also consider GST structure rationalisation, restoration of weighted R&D deduction and simplification of compliance and regulatory framework in the upcoming Union Budget for the financial year 2026-27.

"The industry seeks globally competitive R&D incentives that align with India's innovation ambitions, enhance the scientific ecosystem, and support the transition from a volume-driven model to an innovation-led pharmaceutical

sector," Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) Secretary General Sudarshan Jain said in a statement.

With a strong track record of resilience and innovation over six decades, the industry is poised to achieve its ambitious target of reaching \$120-130 billion by 2030, and ultimately \$450 billion by 2047, he noted. Recent global challenges, including US tariffs, supply chain disruptions, and geopolitical uncertainty, underscore the need for strategic support to maintain and strengthen India's competitive edge, he added.

Besides, there is a need to enhance government healthcare spending towards the National Health Policy 2017 target of 2.5% of GDP by 2026-27 to strengthen the overall healthcare ecosystem, Jain said.

Stressing the need for the restoration of Weighted R&D Deduction (up to 200%), he noted that it would significantly boost investment in novel drugs, complex generics, biosimilars, and vaccines.

Address the widening inverted duty structure, ensuring smooth GST refunds on both goods and services, to maintain manufacturing viability and affordability, Jain said. Incentivise Make in India, backward integration, and FDI in pharma manufacturing, he added.

Ashwa Bravo
wins Ontario
Plate

DELHI RESULTS
Ashwa Bravo, from the stables of S Nawab and ridden by Aasif Khan, won the Ontario Plate, the feature event of the Delhi races on Monday.
1. Noverre Plate (Div-I) - 1100M: Eastern Crown (Sanjay Rai) S GPrasad 1; Ashwa Changez (Nazil) 2; Salam Bhai (R N Manjhi) 3; Maya (G S Shekawat) 4; Wb: Nk, 4-1/4, 1-1/4L T: 1-04.83. TB: Ajay Sharma. Fav: Eastern Crown.
2. Noverre Plate (Div-II) Plate - 1100M: Havana Sky (Amrjeet Singh) Arjun 1; Meridia (R N Manjhi) 2; Master Causeway (Riazuddin) 3; Divine Right (Narendra Kumar) 4; Not Run: Nizbati Wings. Wb: 4-3/4, 4-1/2, 4-1/2L T: 1-05.53. TB: Ajay Sharma. Fav: Divine Right.
3. Golden Crest Plate - 1000M: Master Tornado (Sunil Kumar Varma) Faizan Khan 1; Miss Irina (Vishal) 2; Senor (S G Prasad) 3; Chieftain (Nazil) 4; Wb: 1-1/2, Nk, 1L, 1-05.57. TB: S M Abbas. Fav: Chieftain.
4. Top Glade Plate - 1000M: Cashier (Mrs Yogita Parmar) Arjun 1; Super Speed (S G Prasad) 2; Nizbati Malang (Abdul Fazal) 3; Striking Distance (Rakesh) 4; Wb: 1, Shd, 3-1/2L T: 1-00.31. TB: Shakti Singh. Fav: Cashier.
5. Ontario Plate - 1200M: Ashwa Bravo (Ravinder Pal Singh) Aasif Khan 1; The Panther (Nazil) 2; Lodge Keeper (S G Prasad) 3; Kenaf (Dhanu Deora) 4; Wb: Nk, 1/2, 2-1/4L T: 1-11.14. TB: S.Nawab. Fav: The Panther.
6. Rafah Plate - 1400M: Jaat Hero (Amrjeet Singh) Arjun 1; Master Multitude (Riazuddin) 2; Heer (Vishal) 3; Ashwa Pathan (Nazil) 4; Not Run: Bahadur. Wb: 1-1/4, 5-1/4L Hd. T: 1-25.05. TB: K P Singh. Fav: Ashwa Pathan.
Bangalore dividends:
I race: Rs 12w; 10, 15p; Fc: Rs 34; Q: Rs 16; Shp: Rs 21; Thp: Rs 82; Trl: Rs 195 & 207; Ex: Rs 366 & 151.
II race: Rs 19w; 10, 25p; Fc: Rs 56; Q: Rs 25; Shp: Rs 20; Thp: Rs 19; Trl: Rs 83 & 52; Ex: Rs 129 & 36.
III race: Rs 60w; 16, 29p; Fc: Rs 347; Q: Rs 166; Shp: Rs 37; Thp: Rs 33; Trl: Rs 839 & 454; Ex: Rs 1,914 & 717.
IV race: Rs 20w; 10, 15, 15p; Fc: Rs 64; Q: Rs 32; Shp: Rs 28; Thp: Rs 42; Trl: Rs 432 & 60; Ex: Rs 3,210 & 945.
V race: Rs 44w; 21, 10, 20p; Fc: Rs 224; Q: Rs 120; Shp: Rs 25; Thp: Rs 32; Trl: Rs 815 & 455; Ex: Rs 1,966 & 743.
VI race: Rs 69w; 15, 12, 13p; Fc: Rs 321; Q: Rs 130; Shp: Rs 34; Thp: Rs 34; Trl: Rs 1,448 & 887; Ex: Rs 2,801 & 1,029.
Jackpot: Rs 31,563 (6). **Runner-up:** Rs 1,503 (54). **Treble:** Rs 1,970 (42).

Golden Sun for
plum event

DELHI SELECTIONS
V S Parmar-trained Golden Sun, to be ridden by Dhanu Deora, is fancied to win the Hyderabad Race Club Cup, the feature event of the races here to be run over a sprint on Tuesday. First race starts at 2.00 pm.
1. Charminar Plate - 1600M: Burning Desire 1, Poly Czar 2, Euphoria 3.
2. Telangana Plate - 1100M: Bay Of Biscay 1, Sunchaser 2, Real Boss 3.
3. Sikandrabad Plate (Div-I) - 1000M: Aegir 1, Ticker 2, Divit 3.
4. Sikandrabad Plate (Div-II) - 1000M: Divine Dancer 1, The Mentalist 2, Dashing Harry 3.
5. Hyderabad Race Club Cup - 1200M: Golden Sun 1, Bellagio 2, Aetius 3.
6. Malakpet Plate - 1200M: Rocket Rod 1, Nothing To Worry 2, Robust 3.
Day's best: Divine Dancer. **Jackpot:** 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. **Treble:** 4, 5 & 6.

SG Pipers pip
Toofans for
maiden win

RANCHI, PTI: SG Pipers secured their first win of the season, prevailing 2-1 against Hyderabad Toofans in the Men's Hockey India League (HIL) here on Monday.
Tomas Domene bagged a brace for the winners, while goalkeeper Tomas Santiago was remarkable between the sticks. For the Toofans, Amandeep Lakragot on the scoresheet at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Astro Turf Hockey Stadium.
SG Pipers hit the ground running in this game, dominating the opening minutes of the contest. They earned a succession of penalty corners before eventually converting one through Tomas Domene's (8th) dragkick that gave them the early lead.
The Pipers had a total of six penalty corners in the first fifteen minutes, while their opponents had none, underlying their superiority.
The Toofans grew into the game though, registering five circle entries, but they only had one attempt on goal to show for all their possession.
The Toofans continued to have the laying share of possession to begin the second quarter, pushing their opponents back. They had 12 circle entries and four penalty corners, registering seven shots on goal, but they yielded no result.
Instead, it was the SG Pipers that bagged their second goal against the run of play after some exceptional work from Roman Duvoket set up Tomas Domene (29th) for his brace, giving his side a 2-0 advantage at half-time.
Despite the deficit, Toofans remained on the front foot in search of a goal that would get them back in the game.

Barca put on a Super show

Raphinha hits brace as
Catalans down Real in final

JEDDAH, AFP
Barcelona retained the Spanish Super Cup with an entertaining 3-2 Clasicos win over Real Madrid in Saudi Arabia on Sunday.
Raphinha struck twice for the Catalans with Robert Lewandowski also on target as they beat Xabi Alonso's team for a record-extending 16th triumph, despite Frenkie de Jong's late red card for a foul on Kylian Mbappe.
The French forward could only feature in the final stages as a substitute after a knee sprain, with the defeat likely to bring back recent doubts around Madrid coach Xabi Alonso's future.
After Raphinha sent Barcelona ahead Vinicius Junior pulled Madrid level with a fine individual goal to kick-start a frenetic end to the first half in Jeddah. Lewandowski chipped Barca back in front but Gonzalo Garcia struck deep in stoppage time to send the teams in level at the break.
The battle was decided by a deflected Raphinha effort after 73 minutes, as Barca claimed the fourth trophy of coach Hansi Flick's reign.
Alonso is still looking for his first after arriving in June, and Madrid's run of five consecutive wins across all competitions was brought to an end by their arch-rivals. Barca thrashed Madrid 5-2 in last season's final, also at the King Abdullah Sports City stadium, but this was a far closer affair.

Real replace
Alonso with
Arbeloa

Real Madrid said Monday that coach Xabi Alonso has left the club by mutual consent, to be replaced by Alvaro Arbeloa, reports AFP.
A day after the team lost the Spanish Super Cup final against Barcelona, the club parted ways with the Basque coach and immediately appointed former Madrid player Arbeloa, who was coaching the reserve side.



Barcelona players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Spanish Super Cup in Jeddah on Sunday. AFP

Man United hit a new low

MANCHESTER, AFP
Darren Fletcher admitted Manchester United's "fragile" players have lost their confidence after Sunday's FA Cup exit against Brighton left Old Trafford in turmoil.
Managerless, out of both domestic cups at the first hurdle for the first time since 1981-82 and sitting a disappointing seventh in the Premier League, United have rarely been at a lower ebb in their history. Caretaker boss Fletcher, who stepped up from his role as United's Under-18 coach after Ruben Amorim's dismissal on Monday, experienced the club's glory days as a midfielder under legendary manager Alex Ferguson.
But those trophy-filled years seem a lifetime ago for Fletcher and the furious fans who filled the air with boos throughout the 2-1 loss against Brighton.
United's first FA Cup third round defeat since 2014 underscored the litany of problems scarring the club at present. Few have faith that United will hire the right manager after Amorim lasted just 14 turbulent months.
The BBC and Sky Sports said talks between the 44-year-old and the club's hierarchy had progressed well, with United keen to make an appointment before players returned to training on Wednesday. Carrick was caretaker boss at Old Trafford in 2021.



Darren Fletcher

Carrick
frontrunner
for United job

Michael Carrick is in pole position to be named as Manchester United's interim manager until the end of the season, according to media reports on Monday.
The BBC and Sky Sports said talks between the 44-year-old and the club's hierarchy had progressed well, with United keen to make an appointment before players returned to training on Wednesday. Carrick was caretaker boss at Old Trafford in 2021.

Tilottama makes a
seamless transition

SHREYA SANJEEV
BENGALURU, DHNS
Tilottama Sen's medal run this season has come with an unfamiliar ease. Ending 2025 as a National Champion, the Bengaluru teen ushered in the new year with an 11-medal haul, including six golds, in the just-concluded National Championships across two cities – Bhopal and Delhi.
The podium finishes and the quiet comfort of mastering two disciplines suggest a shooter in control of her craft. But the calm comes after a turbulent pivot – one born out of disappointment, fatigue and a conscious decision to fall back in love with the sport.
The turning point came after she missed out on Olympic selection in the 10m air rifle despite securing a quota for India, leaving a deep scar in her mind.
“It was quite overwhelming for me to go to the range and shoot 10m, especially,” Tilottama tells *DH*. “So, I just started 50m so that I could bring back that joy which I had.”
The heartbreak was shaped as much by policy as performance. For the second time in Indian shooting history, a quota winner was not automatically sent to the Games.
A revised selection process placed shooters through internal trials. “She missed it by a fraction, 0.25,” her father, Sujit Sen, recalls. “She was quite disappointed and stopped shooting for a month.”
What began as an emotional reset soon turned into a competitive revelation. That was also when the structure around her began to change.
After years of being effectively self-coached, analysing shot patterns on spreadsheets, studying elite shooters through YouTube and refining technique through trial and error, Sen finally brought a national coach into the picture.
“When I started observing her closely, I realised she was a quick learner,” says coach Manoj Kumar. “Especially with technical things, she would work on feedback and come back asking if it had improved. That tells you a lot about an athlete.”
Encouraged by Manoj, who noticed her aptitude even without structured training, Sen committed to the 50m three-position event.
“She was already very good at air rifle,” he says. “So I was confident she could pick up small-bore as well, and she picked it up very fast.”
The irony is that 50m was never part of the plan. Tilottama had spent the last five years as a 10m shooter, and the idea of switching disciplines never crossed her mind early on. However, the complexity of 50m with its constant transitions eventually drew her in.
“It is quite interesting because you have 3 different positions. And it's fun shooting .22!”
Looking ahead to LA 2028, Sen is clear-eyed. She wants consistency in both 10m and 50m, and possible team events, holding space for three gold medals in her collection.
For now, though, her metric remains simple: “Did I give my 100 per cent that day? And if it's a yes, then no matter what score I shoot or what medal I win doesn't really matter.”
“If it's a yes, then I'm good to go.”



Bengaluru teen Tilottama Sen returned with a rich haul of medals in the recently held National Shooting Championships.

All 14 ISL clubs confirm participation in writing

NEW DELHI, PTI
All the 14 Indian Super League (ISL) clubs have written to the All India Football Federation (AIFF), formally confirming participation in the delayed 2025-26 season, clearing the decks for the start of the top-tier domestic competition on February 14.
On January 6, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya had announced that the ISL, which was on hold due to the absence of a commercial partner, would start on February 14, with all the 14 clubs taking part in it.
Despite the minister's announcement, a few clubs were yet to confirm participation in writing as they had agreed to take part in the ISL “in principle” only.
But now, all the clubs have formally confirmed participation in the truncated league, a source in the AIFF told PTI on Monday.
“Yes, all the 14 clubs have confirmed participation in writing,” the source said.
AIFF President Kalyan Chaubey had earlier said that a Governing Council Board would be formed to manage the league and it would be “empowered to take all commercial decisions.” It is learnt that the AIFF and the clubs are expected to have an online meeting on Tuesday and jointly discuss the formation of the Governing Council Board.

Usha to head 'reactivated'
National Olympic Academy

NEW DELHI, PTI: Calling it a major step towards strengthening the Olympic movement in India, the IOA on Monday announced the “formal reactivation” of a National Olympic Academy (NOA) in Ahmedabad with its President and sprint legend PT Usha leading the facility's management.
The IOA (Indian Olympic Association) also said that a National Olympic Education and Development Programme (NOEDP) will also be launched.
India had a Bharat Centre of Olympic Research and Education (BCROE) at the Rashtriya Raksha University in Gandhinagar. While the NOA has existed since 2018, its operations were stalled due to various reasons, including the Covid-19 pandemic.
The decisions were taken during the IOA (Indian Olympic Association) Executive Council meeting held on January 8.

NSG Act notified,
ministry reiterates
ban on convicts

Ten-tier criteria laid down for SOM in General Bodies of NSFs
NEW DELHI, PTI
The Sports Ministry on Monday notified the rules that would govern the implementation of the National Sports Governance Act, unveiling a tiered eligibility criteria for the inclusion of Sportspersons of Merit (SOM) in national federations and reiterating the ban on convicted people from the election process.
The Act was partially implemented on January 1 and the National Sports Federations have been given six months to amend their by-laws to make them compliant with the new law. They have also been allowed to delay any pending election process till the end of this year for a smooth transition.
The ministry mandates at least four SOM, two of them women, in the General Bodies of national sports bodies.
Athletes who have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal in the Summer Olympic Games or Winter Olympic Games have been placed in Tier I. Tier II is for those who have participated in two or more editions of the Olympics or the Winter Olympics. Tier III would be for applicants who have participated in at least one edition of the Olympics or Winter Olympics. Winners of Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award or an Arjuna Award are in Tier IV, while Tier V is for applicants who have won at least a gold, silver or bronze medal or equivalent placing, in a World Championship or “equivalent competition”. There are a total of 10 tiers in descending order of achievements.
With the implementation of the Act notified, a three-member National Sports Board, from which the NSFs will have to seek affiliation for grant of government funds, will take shape in the days to come. A five-member search-cum-selection panel headed by the Cabinet Secretary will assess candidates.
Persons convicted of any offence by a court of law will continue to be barred from contesting elections to the Executive Committee and the Athletes Commission of national federations. “A person shall be disqualified from being a member of the General Body, or of any committee of a National Sports Body, and shall not be eligible for contesting for election to the Executive Committee or the Athletes Commission, if such person is (a) declared insolvent under applicable law or (b) subject to a conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction in India for an offence, followed by a sentence of imprisonment...,” the rules stated.
The sportspersons applying to be designated as SOMs should not be less than 25 years of age and must have retired from active sports. The rules provide that the roster of the National Sports Election Panel must have at least 20 members at all times.

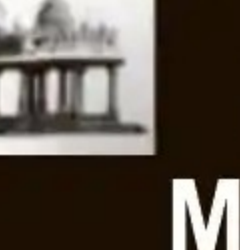


TOP 5 TIERS FOR SOM	
■ I. Athletes who have won at least one of any gold, silver or bronze medal in the Summer Olympics or Winter Olympics.	won a Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award or an Arjuna Award
■ II. Athletes who have participated in two or more editions of the Olympics or the Winter Olympics.	■ V. Athletes who have won at least a gold, silver or bronze medal or equivalent placing in a World Championship or “equivalent competition”. * There are a total of 10 tiers in descending order of achievements. *At least four Sportspersons of Merit (SOM), two of them women, in the General Bodies of national sports bodies.
■ III. Athletes who have participated in at least one edition of the Olympics or Winter Olympics.	
■ IV. Athletes who have	



**BANGALORE METROPOLITAN
REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**
Office of the Metropolitan Commissioner
No. 1, Ali Askar Road, Bengaluru - 560 052 Ph:080-22263479
No. BMRDA/Acts/40/2025-26 Date: 12.01.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
e-Auction for Investment of Surplus funds of Bangalore Metropolitan Region Development Authority has been published in e-Procurement Portal of Gok. For details visit www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in
Sd/-
Joint Metropolitan Commissioner
Bangalore Metropolitan
Region Development Authority, Bengaluru



**Government of Karnataka
Department Of Archaeology,
Museums And Heritage, Mysore**
Karnataka Exhibition Authority Premises, Mysuru-570010,
Tel : 0821-2424673/74, Fax No.0821-2424665,
Email- comm_ amh@yahoo.in, Web : <https://archaeology.karnataka.gov.in>,
<https://nammakarnataka.in>

Tender Notification Number: DAMH/CWT-27/2025-26 Date: 06.01.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION	
On behalf of the Governor, Government of Karnataka, the department of Archaeology, Museum and Heritage, Mysuru has invited the itemwise tender for the Service and works of DAMH/2025-26:OW/ WORK_INDENT-139 Call-2, DAMH/2025-26:SE0004/call-6, 21/call-3, 22/call-6, 31/call-2 under the standard tender documents KW-4. The amount of minimum Rs.50.00 lakhs to Maximum Rs. 546.35 lakhs kept for these tenders as per Standard Tender bid Document. Tender documents can be obtained through (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/) e-portal from date 07.01.2026 onwards.	
1 to 2 Pre-bid meeting of Date and Time	28.01.2026, 11.00 hrs.
1 to 2 works Last date and time of any Queries for tender	29.01.2026, 17.00 hrs
1 to 2 Last date and time of tender submission	05.02.2026, 16.00 hrs
1 to 2 Opening of Date and Time of Technical bid	07.02.2026. 16.30 hrs.
1 to 2 Opening of Date and Time of Financial bid	09.02.2026, 11.00 hrs
3 to 5 works Last date and time of any Queries for tender	16.01.2026, 17.00 hrs
3 to 5 Last date and time of tender submission	21.01.2026, 16.00 hrs
3 to 5 Opening of Date and Time of Technical bid	23.01.2026, 16.30 hrs
3 to 5 Opening of Date and Time of Financial bid	27.01.2026, 11.00 hrs
Sd/- Commissioner Department of Archaeology, Museums And Heritage, Mysore.	
DIPR/MYSORE/SHIRDI SAI/1501/2025-26	



TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MADHUGIRI
Tumkur District, Phone : 08137 - 282328, 283866,
E-mail : ka.madhugiri.tmc@gmail.com
Website : www.madhugiritown.town.gov.in

No. : T.M.C.J.J.E./Tender/CR/07/2025-26 Date : 08-01-2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

For Tender Details KPPP Portal Website (<https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>)

As per KTTT Act 1999 - 2000 Rule 2000, Chief Officer, Town Municipal Council Madhugiri was invited Tender for Works under 2018-19 SFC Special Grants from eligible Tenderer can participate Tender for the following Works in KPPP Portal Website : <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>
WORK INDENT : 1) DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT52067/ Call-3, Tender Cost (Rs. Lakhs) : 55.00, Last Date of Receipt of Tender : 23-01-2026 @ 5.30 p.m., Date for Opening Technical Bid : 27-01-2026 @ 10.30 a.m., Date for Opening Financial Bid : 28-01-2026 @ 10.30 a.m.
Note : For more Information contact office during working hours.
Sd/- Administrator, TMC, Madhugiri
Sd/- Chief Officer, TMC, Madhugiri
DIPR/Tumakuru/64/Manipal/2025-26



Anupama Ramachandran

Anupama wears billiards crown

BENGALURU, DHNS: It was payback time at the HL City Star Academy on Monday. IBSF World Snooker champion Anupama Ramachandran, who lost the National snooker crown to Ameer Kamani on Sunday evening, avenged that defeat in the final of the women's National billiards championship in Bahadurgarh, Haryana.

Although the one-hour final was bereft of big breaks, the Tamil Nadu cueist made the most of the chances that came her way for a rather comfortable 197-112 victory and dash her famed rival's hopes of a double crown.

The Chennai player put the snooker debacle behind her and focused on the task at hand. Even though catching a flight home in the evening was at the back of her mind, the 23-year-old seemed to enjoy the game, which in turn helped her to dominate Ameer en route to her second National billiards title.

"A National title is always special and it feels great to have won it," said Anupama, who along with Ameer and Vidya Pillai, will figure in the Heyball World Cup that begins in Brisbane on Friday.

In the bronze medal playoff, Shruthi edged out R Umadevi 152-140 in a thriller.

Results: Final: Anupama Ramachandran (TN) bt Ameer Kamani (MP) 197-112.

Third-place playoff: L Shruthi (TN) bt R Umadevi (Kar) 152-140.

Final standings: Anupama Ramachandran 1; Ameer Kamani 2; L Shruthi 3; R Umadevi 4; Ishika Shah 5; Senthira Babu (TN) 6; Aanya Patel (Guj) 8.

IN BRIEF

Yuki-Goransson in quarterfinals

► Top seeds Yuki Bhambri and Andre Goransson made a confident start to their campaign at the ASB Classic, cruising into the men's doubles quarterfinals with a straight-set win on Monday, reports PTI from Auckland.

Bhambri and Goransson defeated wild card pairing Ajeet Rai and Jean-Julien Rojer 6-3, 6-2 in a first-round match, displaying sharp coordination and control throughout the contest.

Trailblazing Raonic retires

► Trailblazing former world No. 3 Milos Raonic announced his retirement from tennis on Monday, ending a career that earned him eight ATP titles, reports AFP from Melbourne.

The big-serving 35-year-old, the first Canadian man to reach a Grand Slam singles final, has not competed in over a year. Raonic's best season was in 2016, when he reached the Wimbledon final after defeating Roger Federer in the semis, losing to Andy Murray in the decider. He also advanced to the Australian Open semifinals and the ATP Finals the same year.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET
Vijay Hazare Trophy quarterfinals: Punjab vs Madhya Pradesh, Delhi vs Vidarbha (both 9 am). LIVE on JioHotstar & Star Sports Khel.
WPL: Mumbai Indians vs Gujarat Giants (7:30 pm). LIVE on Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar.
HOCKEY
HIL: Shrawari Rarh Bengal Tigers vs Tamil Nadu Dragons (7:30 PM). LIVE on Sony Sports Ten 1.

CRICKET VIJAY HAZARE TROPHY

Padikkal, Nair to the fore again

Champions
Karnataka outplay
Mumbai to storm
into semifinals

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
BENGALURU, DHNS

For all the fight a depleted Mumbai showcased in phases, they were just not in the same league as defending champions Karnataka at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence Ground 1 here on Monday.

Devdutt Padikkal (81 not out, 95b, 11x4) and Karun Nair (74 not out, 80b, 11x4) anchored the chase to perfection after the hosts' four-pronged pace attack was too hot to handle in cool and cloudy conditions as Karnataka charged into the semifinals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy with a commanding 55-run victory by VJD method after the game was called off prematurely due to bad light and rain.

Chasing 255, Padikkal's outside edge got him two lucky boundaries off Onkar Tarmale (0/42) in the second over. He then drove Mohit Avasthi (1/24) down the ground and started to ooze confidence.

Padikkal then flicked Tarmale through mid-on while Mayank Agarwal (12, 24b) cautiously left balls outside off and picked up singles to keep the scoreboard ticking. However, he poked Avasthi to first slip and walked back in the 10th over. Padikkal got a few prievies, first on 26 (Tarmale at fine leg) and then on 29 (Angkrish Raghuvanshi at slip), and unlike Raghuvanshi, he cashed in.

Padikkal pulled and flicked Sairaj Patil to pick up back-to-back boundaries, and then



LEFT: Devdutt Padikkal (left) and Karun Nair struck unbeaten half-centuries to steer Karnataka's smooth chase after pacer Vidyadhar Patil (right) claimed three wickets during their Vijay Hazare Trophy quarterfinal against Mumbai at the BCCI's CoE in Bengaluru on Monday. DH PHOTOS/ KRISHNAKUMAR P S

reached his 14th List A fifty in 64 balls. Nair looked in ominous touch as he drove Avasthi to the fence on his third ball. When Shams Mulani was introduced, Karun drifted onto the backfoot and pulled him over mid-wicket twice in two overs.

The 34-year-old soon brought up his 16th List A fifty off 44 balls in a knock that would please him after having scored just 24 runs in the last three matches. Padikkal and Nair also shared an unbeaten 143-run stand.

Earlier, Mumbai were hit by a massive blow before the game with Sarfaraz Khan out injured during practice and Tushar Deshpande flying back home due to an emergency.

In line with that, they played Ishan Mulchandani (20, 32b, 2x4), who looked solid and played out the quicks for singles and twos while looking for the odd boundary.

Vidyadhar Patil (3/42) finally broke the cautious partnership in the 12th over when Mulchandani failed to middle a pull shot, handing a catch to Padikkal at short third. Vidyadhar dealt another blow in the form of Musheer Khan (9, 7b, 1x6), giving Padikkal his second catch of the morning.

Raghuvanshi was lucky as he was dropped by Nair at first slip off Vidwath Kaverappa (2/43) on five. However, he failed to make full use as he was knocked over while trying to play the wrong line by Vyshak

Vijaykumar (1/59). After a few dents, Mumbai's innings was steadied by a fighting Shams Mulani (86, 91b, 8x4). The 28-year-old started steadily and found his range, notching up a third List A fifty.

Saurashtra through

Fuelled by a brilliant hundred by skipper Harvik Desai, Saurashtra defeated Uttar Pradesh by 17 runs (VJD method) at the BCCI's CoE 2 here.

Desai (100 not out, 116b, 8x4, 2x6), who scored his second hundred in three games, helped Saurashtra stay in the hunt and just ahead as they were 238 for the loss of three wickets in 40.1 overs when the covers were brought on.

However, it was Chirag

Jani (40 not out), who played the lead role in the unbeaten 76-run stand with Desai after Prerak Mankad (67) laid the platform.

Earlier, fifties from Abhishek Goswami (88) and Sameer Rizvi (88 not out) guided UP to 310/8 in 50 overs.

Brief scores: Mumbai: 254/8 in 50 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 27, Siddesh Lad 38, Shams Mulani 86, Sairaj Patil 32 n.o.; Vidwath Kaverappa 2-32, Abhilash Shetty 2-59, Vidyadhar Patil 3-42) It to Karnataka: 187/1 in 33 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 81 n.o., Karun Nair 74 n.o.).

Uttar Pradesh: 310/8 in 50 overs (Abhishek Goswami 88, Priyam Garg 35, Sameer Rizvi 88 n.o., Prashant Veer 30; Chetan Sakariya 3-54, Ankur Panwar 2-75, Prerak Mankad 2-47) It to Saurashtra: 238/3 in 40.1 overs (Harvik Desai 100 n.o., Prerak Mankad 67, Chirag Jani 40 n.o.).

Quarterfinals: Jan 13: Punjab vs Madhya Pradesh (CoE 1), Delhi vs Vidarbha (CoE 2).



CRICKET WPL

Harris carnage fuels Challengers

Opener smashes
40-ball 85 to star in
9-wkt win over UP

NAVI MUMBAI, PTI

Grace Harris produced a breathtaking display of power-hitting en route to a 40-ball 85 to script Royal Challengers Bengaluru's emphatic nine-wicket win over UP Warriorz in their Women's Premier League match here on Monday.

UP Warriorz had recovered admirably from a dramatic collapse to post 143/5, thanks to a superb rescue act by seasoned all-rounders Deandra Dottin and Deepti Sharma.

Harris then smashed the fastest fifty of the season, racing to the landmark in just 22 balls before finishing with a scintillating knock that was studded with 10 fours and five sixes.

The second successive victory lifted the former champions to the top of the standings.

Skipper Smriti Mandhana played the perfect foil with an elegant unbeaten 47 from 32

balls, including nine boundaries, as the pair put on a 137-run stand to make it a no-contest. RCB chased down the target in just 12.1 overs, significantly boosting their net run rate.

Chasing 144, Harris set the tone in a brutal Powerplay assault that left UP Warriorz shell-shocked. She tore into Dottin with a stunning exhibition of clean hitting, plundering 32 runs from one over that effectively decided the contest.

The Australian started by clobbering a no-ball for four and followed it up with three towering sixes and two more boundaries in a sequence. Harris repeatedly cleared mid-wicket and mid-on with effortless power, bringing up her half-century in no time.

The onslaught continued against leg-spinner Asha Sobhana, whom Harris punished in a 17-run over.

Brief scores: UP Warriorz: 143/5 in 20 overs (Deepti Sharma 45 n.o., Deandra Dottin 40 n.o.; Shreyanka Patil 2-50, Nadine de Klerk 2-28) It to Royal Challengers Bengaluru: 145/1 in 12.1 overs (Grace Harris 85, Smriti Mandhana 47 n.o.) by 9 wkts.

PoM: Grace Harris. **RCB's next match:** Vs Gujarat Giants (Jan 16, Navi Mumbai).



Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Grace Harris smashes one to the boundary during her match-winning 85 against UP Warriorz in Navi Mumbai on Monday. PTI

ICC unlikely to accept Bangladesh's security concerns

NEW DELHI, PTI



The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday indicated that it is unlikely to accept Bangladesh's demand for a change of venue for its T20 World Cup matches in India after an assessment report of the country's security concerns placed the threat perception at "low".

As per ICC sources, the world body's risk assessment report does not flag any specific or direct threat to the Bangladesh team if it participates in the tournament starting February 7.

It also contradicts claims made by Bangladesh sports ministry advisor Asif Nazrul that Mustafizur Rahman's inclusion in the team would contribute to the overall threat.

Bangladesh are due to play four league stage matches in India. "It is important to clarify that the ICC's independent risk assessments, carried out by internationally recognised security experts, do not conclude that Bangladesh cannot play its scheduled matches in India," an ICC source told PTI on condition of anonymity.

"The overall security risk for the tournament in India has been assessed as low to moderate, which is consistent with the profile of many major global sporting events," the source said.

According to the source, the assessment did not identify any direct threat even to the Bangladesh officials at any venue in India. "Based on the professional advice received, the risk associated with Bangladesh's scheduled fixtures in Kolkata and Mumbai is assessed as low to moderate, with no indication of risks that cannot be effectively managed through established security planning and mitigation measures," the source added.

This follows public comments by Nazrul in Dhaka in which he suggested that the ICC report had flagged a threat to Mustafizur, whose omission from the IPL on BCCI's directions owing to unspecified "developments all around" prompted the pullout threat from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The BCB later issued a clarification, effectively backpedaling on the assertions made by Nazrul on Monday. The BCB, however, reiterated that it has requested relocation of Bangladesh's matches outside India "in the interest of the team's security" and that it is still awaiting an official response from the ICC on this matter.

However, the ICC source maintained that the existing schedule is unlikely to be tinkered with.

Mangalore University's Nirmala bags 10,000m gold

NEW DELHI, PTI

BENGALURU, DHNS: Gaurav and Nirmala won the men's and women's 10,000m gold in the 85th all-India inter-university athletics championships which began at the Swarajya Maidan in Moodubidre on Monday.

Mangalore University's Nirmala was in the fourth spot for almost the entire race with Anjali Devi doing all the front running. But Nirmala, from Churu in Rajasthan, and Savitribai Phule's Gayakwad Ravina Vijay beat Lovely Professional's Anjali on the home stretch to take the gold and silver. Nirmala clocked 34:47.20s.

The results (10,000M): Men: Gaurav (MJPR, Bareilly, 29:19.46s) 1; Aavkash (MD, Rohtak, 29:19.91) 2; Princirai Yadav (ASMV, Raichur, 29:21.40) 3. **Women:** Nirmala (Mangalore, 34:47.20s) 1; Gayakwad Ravina Vijay (SPP, Pune, 34:48.07) 2; Anjali Devi (Lovely Professional, Phagwara, 34:49.54) 3.

Hopes, tricky draws await Indians



India's ace men's doubles pair (from left) Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and PV Sindhu during a press conference in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

India's top shuttlers, including P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen, will look to convert recent form into results on home courts when the USD 950,000 India Open Super 750 begins here on Tuesday.

Indian players, however, have struggled to fully capitalise on home advantage, with only a handful lifting the title in the last 15 years.

The draw once again will throw up early challenges for the home contingent, including a marquee all-Indian men's singles opener between Lakshya Sen and Ayush Shetty, while Sindhu begins against Vietnam's Nguyen Thuy Linh.

Sindhu, a 2017 champion, comes into the Delhi leg on the back of a confidence-boosting run at the Malaysia Open Super 1000, where she reached the semifinals before losing to China's Wang Zhiyi.

The tournament, to be held at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, marked a timely lift for the two-time Olympic

Yew, Chou Tien Chen and Brian Yang.

Last week, the 20-year-old from Karnataka, a bronze medalist at the 2023 World Junior Championships, upset Paris bronze medalist Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia in the first round.

At Kuala Lumpur, Lakshya had lost to Hong Kong's Lee Cheuk Yiu, who now awaits H S Prannoy in the India Open first round.

India's best podium hopes again hinge on men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty.

They have reached two finals in the last four editions, winning the crown in 2022.

The Indian duo finished runners-up at Hong Kong Open and China Masters, won a second world championships bronze and also reached the knockout stage of World Tour Finals last year.

However, Satwik and Chirag ended campaign at Malaysia Open in the quarterfinals and they will look to make amends when they open against Chen Zhi Yi and Presley Smith.